# FRAMING LISTENING EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED WORKS OF CORELLI

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Dedicated to Charley,

who never gives up on me

and

in loving memory of my father, John A. Weaver, Jr.,

who did everything with excellence.

**Acknowledgements**

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"
-1 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
-1 Corinthians 15:57 (NIV)

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Katrina D. Roush

FRAMING LISTENING EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED WORKS OF CORELLI

No two listening experiences are exactly the same. Each experience relies not only on musical material, but also on details about listeners, their environment, and their situation in time. Because of this, a number of listeners hearing the same performance will have different experiences, and one listener listening to a recording more than once will experience it differently at different points in time. In these cases, music seems to change—not due to the score or performance, but due to listeners. Most traditional analysis focuses on events that happen within a piece or ways that a piece can act on listeners. What I propose is a shift in analytical perspective to include listeners as an active, necessary component in the musical process.

I apply Gibsonian affordances to analytical situations to emphasize the necessity of listeners. In Gibson's visual world, affordances depend on both the properties of an object and the needs of a perceiver. Because of this relationship, affordances can lend insight into the interaction between object and perceiver. I argue that in the musical world, affordances similarly exist in the interaction between piece and listener. When affordances are used to shape the conversation around musical experience, listeners become mandatory participants as they mediate their experiences in various ways. To further explore the importance and intrigue of subjective experiences, I track multiple listening paths through musical passages and, through comparison of affordances in various interpretations, explain how these different listeners actively mediate their own experiences.

Chapter 1 begins by advocating a greater acknowledgement of personal, subjective listening experiences in analytical accounts. It explains how principles from Gibsonian affordances can be applied to music in order to facilitate this shift, namely the focus of musical affordances on listeners and the variant properties they bear. Chapter 2 examines potential issues analysts may encounter when working with subjective musical experiences and suggests solutions to such problems, including the concept of passive listening, questions about the ontology of music, language used to refer to listeners, and standards

of academic rigor in such discussions. The analyses in Chapters 3 and 4 use musical affordances and mediation to highlight the interaction between piece and listener, explaining possible listener-centric causes for experiential differences. By providing multiple readings of relatively short examples by Corelli, they explore how listeners' attention and expectations can mediate musical affordances and therefore musical experience. By tracking my experiences with op. 3 and op. 6/8, Chapter 5 explores the implications of analysis of experience as an enhancement of traditional analytical methods. Chapter 6 concludes by applying both experiential analysis and traditional formal analysis to Beethoven's Spring Sonata, op. 24, I. Allegro, in order to demonstrate the potential for these analytical ideas to be used more broadly beyond Corelli's works.

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All score examples reproduced are in public domain.

**Arcangelo Corelli, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der musikalischen Werke*, vol. 1, 2, 4, ed. Hans Oesch (Köln: Arno Volk Verlag, 1978-1987).**

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## Chapter 1: Affordances in Musical Analysis

> "Perception is a matter of being turned to the opportunities that the environment offers, and aesthetic objects offer exceptionally multivalent opportunities. We shouldn't shy away from recognizing that this leads to diverse perceptions; that some of these will reflect the particular preoccupations and perceptual tuning of an individual; and indeed that perceptual information can be properly described only relative to the capacities, sensitivities, and interest of a perceiver."[1]

### 1.0 Introduction to the Study of Listening Experiences

My first memory of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is of my father plunking out the opening tune on our piano with his index finger. As far as I know, this was the only thing he knew how to play on the instrument, or any instrument, for that matter. Although the rhythm was recognizable, the meter was never steady; he hesitated whenever he had to reposition his hand. It was certainly not in the right key. Yet I learned to recognize Beethoven's Fifth Symphony from this version—the version that I heard first, and repeatedly. It was years before I heard the first movement performed by an orchestra.

Even now, separated from this experience by decades of time and many instances of hearing the symphony the "right" way, I can still hear my father playing the melody in my head. I carry with me the memories of his hesitations and his awkwardly shaped phrases. These memories from my childhood, even when subconscious, still color my experience of the movement and my interpretation of it. No one else experiences Beethoven's Fifth quite like I do, because I have this unique subjective perspective.

Usually, in music theory, we would treat my father's musical influence as a blemish of sorts, as if it taints the "purity" of my listening experiences. From this standpoint, it seems as though I should try to rid myself of this influence. But it is impossible to separate my present self from my past listening experiences. I could attempt to ignore the memories and feelings conjured up from these experiences, but I could never totally divorce myself from them.

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[1] Eric F. Clarke, "What's Going On: Music, Psychology, and Ecological Theory," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 341.

Furthermore, even if it were possible for me to eliminate the influence of my past experiences, I am wholly unconvinced that this would provide "better" musical experiences for me going forward. In some ways, the memories of my father's "performances" endear the symphony to me. When my father was alive, we shared little from the classical music world, but this association was one rare way that he was present in this part of my life. Now that he is gone, this special connection with him remains, and the symphony is more meaningful to me because of it. This fact is neither right nor wrong; it just *is*.

What I propose throughout this document is a shift in perspective regarding personal, subjective experiences with music. Instead of ignoring them or problematizing them, I bring subjective issues into the light and talk about how they can affect our perceptions of music. It is my hope that the following arguments and analyses prompt more conversations about individual experiences with music.

Most present-day analysis focuses on events that happen within a piece,[2] such as those elements that make up motives and melodies, various levels of structure, and musical styles. Although some analysts begin with a score and others with a performance, almost all focus on a perspective that stems from the piece itself. But how do we explain changes in experience that cannot be attributed to scores and performances? Listeners (and their environments) are the parts of the equation that are dynamic, always fluctuating. Therefore, although I address musical parameters in this document, instead of focusing on them, I primarily focus on changes between or within listeners. How do listeners affect their own experiences?

Each listener is different, with a different personality, history, social standing, set of biases, level of affinity for certain types of music, familiarity with various styles, and personal preferences. One listener can have diverse experiences with the same piece, as well, based on variants such as mood, alertness, expectations, willingness to engage, information learned from previous listenings, and other

[2] Throughout this document, I use the term "piece" to refer to specific aspects of a musical work that are separate from a listener and listening environment, such as a score and performance, and specific factors that play into them. See Chapter 2 for a more fleshed out explanation of my distinction of the terms "piece," "listener," and "music."

proximal listening experiences.[3] The discussions in this document show how giving listeners a participatory role in analysis can expose and examine the influence of such factors.

It is not as if listeners are completely forgotten in music analysis. Occasionally, analyses refer to people, such as composers, performers, characters, personas, and listeners, although this is hardly the focal point of analysis in the field of music theory. For example, Jenefer Robinson's analysis of a Brahms intermezzo states that "the way that the tonic is constantly foreshortened gives it a questing, yearning quality."[4] This statement subtly brings up the necessity of a listener. To whom does the intermezzo in question seem questing and yearning, if not to someone who is listening to it? However, Robinson's phrasing downplays the listener and focuses on elements within the piece.

Even when listeners are explicitly included in analysis, they usually exist as observers. The piece is given active qualities, and it in turn creates an experience for passive listeners. Robert Hatten's analysis of a Mozart piano sonata "supports a range of aesthetically warranted and at times cognitively complex emotions that one might experience."[5] Throughout the analysis, Hatten provides details about the musical surface and explains how specific musical features express emotional content. The focus here is on compositional choices that affect listeners. Listeners may feel or recognize emotions in response to a musical performance, and they have some control over their level of engagement.[6] Beyond this, they are not an active part of the musical process.

I believe that both these analyses give insights into various aspects of pieces that are important for us to acknowledge. Robinson's analysis demonstrates how a piece can put constraints on how it is interpreted.[7] Hatten's analysis illuminates, through recomposition, certain musical gestures that seem to

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[3] For a much more comprehensive consideration of this topic based on empirical work, see Alf Gabrielsson, *Strong Experiences with Music: Music Is Much More than Just Music*, trans. Rod Bradbury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[4] Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 341.
[5] Robert S. Hatten, "Aesthetically Warranted Emotion and Composed Expressive Trajectories in Music," *Music Analysis* 29, no. 1–3 (2010), 85.
[6] Hatten, 89–90.
[7] Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art*, 337.

carry emotional meaning.[8] I only use these passages as examples of analysis in our field to show that it does not usually place listeners in active roles. Most times, when analysis does refer to listeners, it assigns them roles as observers, painting a picture where the piece is solely responsible for music's impact.

I wish to argue that not only is a piece alone not enough to create an impact, but in fact that a piece alone is not enough to create music.[9] Listeners are an essential component in the musical process. They are active, not passive.[10] They actively shape their own perceptions of what they hear, whether intentionally or unintentionally. For me, this realization speaks to the core of what music is and how we experience it. Throughout this document, I will explain why I think this mentality is important, demonstrate how we can use it to enhance our understanding of pieces, and show that acknowledging subjective experiences can fit within scholarly endeavors.[11]

### 1.1 Multiple Readings

In Chapter 2, I expand the arguments presented here, particularly those issues surrounding subjective experiences and their potential in analysis. However, I first wish to fully explain my analytical methodology, which I employ in Chapters 3 and 4, and part of my philosophical framework, which extends throughout Chapters 3 and 4 to culminate in Chapter 5. My methodology in this document is based on three key parameters: multiple readings of each example, the framework of Gibsonian affordances, and selection of works by Arcangelo Corelli.

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[8] Hatten, "Aesthetically Warranted Emotion and Composed Expressive Trajectories in Music," 83–4.
[9] This idea is fleshed out in Chapter 2.
[10] See Ruth Herbert, "Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life," *Journal of Sonic Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a05.
[11] The way any analyst approaches writing an analysis depends on what the analyst intends to demonstrate. A subjective approach is one of many ways to analyze music, and it may enhance certain points that an analyst wishes to make. I am certainly not under the impression that all analysis, or even most analysis, needs to talk about listeners' active role in musical scenarios. I only intend to discuss the possibility of including this perspective some of the time, when the analyst feels it is appropriate, and to draw attention to the fact that subjective listening experiences are largely neglected in current music theory. Of course, there are limits to every method of analysis. It is not always appropriate to include subjective experiences, in much the same way that a Schenkerian approach or neo-Riemannian approach is not always appropriate, depending on the pieces discussed and the goal of the analysis.

One of the main ways I emphasize the importance and intrigue of subjective experiences is through multiple readings of the same examples. I track multiple listening paths through musical passages and, through comparison of various interpretations, explain how listeners actively contribute to their own experiences. Some of these listenings are hypothetical; other readings are examples that I myself have experienced. Instead of basing my analyses primarily on a piece, I shift the focus to changes between different listeners or between different experiences in the same listener.

It is important to note at this point that one of the core beliefs that underlie this project is that no two listening experiences are the same. No two concertgoers will have the same experience of the performance. No two people listening to the same recording through the same speakers will hear a piece in the same way. Similarly, even one person hearing a piece at different times will experience it slightly (or perhaps significantly) differently each time. Clearly, this phenomenon is due to changes between listeners or listening situations, not changes in the score or performance. As Alf Gabrielsson puts it, "It is an illusion to believe that the [piece of] music is the only causal factor. Every music experience—just like any experience at all—is connected to a certain person in a certain situation. The same piece of music can be experienced totally differently by different people. Similarly, one can oneself experience the same piece quite differently in different situations."[12] One of the goals of my analytical examples in Chapters 3 and 4 is to highlight these experiential differences by following multiple paths through each piece.

Edward Cone has already asserted that our listening experiences change over time, as we get to know a piece more intimately. In his essay "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story," he demonstrates how listeners might interpret a Brahms Intermezzo differently based on how many times they had already heard it.[13] His focus is on learning through past experience, which is one aspect of subjective interpretation that I address in Chapter 3 in terms of how it affects attention. My analyses go a step further

[12] Gabrielsson, *Strong Experiences with Music*, 436.
[13] Edward T. Cone, "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story—Or a Brahms Intermezzo," in *Music: A View from Delft*, ed. Robert P. Morgan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 77–93.

by including other qualities and situations that could change the way listeners experience musical passages.

### 1.2 The Ecological Approach (Gibsonian Affordances)

The crux of my methodology involves the concept of affordances, a central principle in James J. Gibson's ecological approach to perception. Gibson applies his ideas mainly to issues of visual perception, but there are many aspects of his theory that map well onto subjective perspectives of musical analysis, which I explore and apply throughout this document.

Gibson's ecological approach emphasizes both the importance of one who receives visual information and the phenomenon of ongoing experiences situated in time. For Gibson, meaning comes not from the physical world, where it would need to be superimposed onto objects, but rather from the ecological world, within an interaction between environment and perceiver.[14] Gibson specifies that in this view of the world, perceiver and environment are not separate. They depend on each other to exist. A perceiver needs an environment, and an environment must by definition surround something.[15] The physical world cannot account for the mutual roles of perceiver and environment.[16]

For me, the most crucial aspect of Gibson's ecological approach is that it takes the whole environment into account and necessitates a perceiver. There is no environment without a perceiver—the environment is a specific *perceiver's* environment. Gibson asserts that a single perceiver's point of observation is always only its, his, or her own. Even when an environment is shared with others, it is a private environment to each individual perceiver at a specific moment in time. Although the physical and perceptual features of the environment are the same, it has different meanings and uses to each perceiver. "Hence, the environment of each observer is 'private,' that is, unique."[17]

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[14] James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 33.
[15] An object in the environment can exist without a perceiver, but a perceiver must be present for its surroundings to properly function as an environment.
[16] Gibson, 8.
[17] Gibson, 43.

The aspect of Gibson's approach to visual perception that I find the most applicable to music listeners is the concept of affordances. Gibson's explanation of his theory of affordances is eloquently put:

> "When the constant properties of constant objects are perceived (the shape, size, color, texture, composition, motion, animation, and position relative to other objects), the observer can go on to detect their *affordances*. I have coined this word as a substitute for *values*, a term which carries an old burden of philosophical meaning. I mean simply what things furnish, for good or ill. What they *afford* the observer, after all, depends on their properties. The simplest affordances, as food, for example, or as a predatory enemy, may well be detected without learning by the young of some animals, but in general learning is all-important for this kind of perception. The child learns what things are manipulable and how they can be manipulated, what things are hurtful, what things are edible, what things can be put together with other things or put inside other things – and so on without limit. He also learns what objects can be used as the means to obtain a goal, or to make other desirable objects, or to make people do what he wants them to do. In short, the human observer learns to detect what have been called the values or meanings of things, perceiving their distinctive features, putting them into categories and subcategories, noticing their similarities and differences and even studying them for their own sakes, apart from learning what to do about them. All this discrimination, wonderful to say, has to be based entirely on the education of his attention to the subtleties of invariant stimulus information."[18]

According to Eric Clarke, one of the few scholars who has applied affordances to music-analytic situations (whose contributions I discuss more fully later in this chapter), affordances come from the intersection of stimulus, object, event, perception, and action. Affordances are opportunities for meaning created by both the object and the perceiver.[19] With affordances, both the environment and perceiver are somewhat flexible, rather than fixed.[20] This flexibility allows each perceptual experience to be unique. Affordances never assume a particular state of environment or perspective of perceiver. Even if an object is the same in various instances, its perceivers' perspectives and environments could map drastically different affordances onto it.

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[18] James J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 285.
[19] Clarke, "What's Going On: Music, Psychology, and Ecological Theory," 337.
[20] Clarke, 338.

I like to use a simple analogy of a pillow to clarify how properties of objects can easily project affordances when they are needed in different ways and in different circumstances. When I am tired, the pillow affords me comfort and sleep when I lay my head on it. If I have a headache, the same pillow, used in the same way, can afford me relief from pain. Depending on the rest of my circumstances (if I am not tired or am in too much pain), it might not afford me sleep. When I am reading a book in bed, the pillow affords me the ability to prop up my book to make it easier to read without bending my neck down too far. If I sit down at my desk and my chair feels too low, I can sit on the pillow. In this instance, the pillow affords me height. If I were freezing to death, I could set the pillow on fire, and the pillow would afford me heat and possibly even survival. Of course, when the pillow is on fire, it no longer affords rest or height in the same way. The changes in each situation, as well as my own needs, change the affordances of the pillow. As Clarke puts it, "affordances are the product both of objective properties and the capacities and needs of the organism that encounters them."[21]

Gibson's research with affordances has had a tremendous influence on scholarly work since then. Within the field of visual perception, his theories have encouraged new ways of identifying and solving problems that still permeate current research. In fields closely tied to perception, such as psychology and cognition, Gibson's impact cannot be overstated.[22]

The ecological theory and the concept of affordances have spread to many other areas of scholarly inquiry as well. One logical place for Gibson's ideas to take hold is the field of sociology,[23]

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[21] Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37.

[22] It is impossible to even scratch the surface here of psychological research that can be traced back to Gibson. To begin looking into these trends, consider Edward S. Reed, *James J. Gibson and the Psychology of Perception* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and Harry Heft, *Ecological Psychology in Context: James Gibson, Roger Barker, and the Legacy of William James's Radical Empiricism*, Resources for Ecological Psychology (Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2001).

[23] Some articles that address social concerns from an ecological perspective are R. C. Schmidt, "Scaffolds for Social Meaning," *Ecological Psychology* 19, no. 2 (2007): 137–51; and Reuben M. Baron, "Situating Coordination and Cooperation between Ecological and Social Psychology," *Ecological Psychology* 19, no. 2 (2007): 179–99.

since many of his ideas are contextual and cultural in nature.[24] Similarly, the social act of conversation is sometimes framed in ecological terms by linguistic scholars.[25] In some of his writings, such as the extended quote above, Gibson touches on how children learn.[26] Appropriately, in current scholarship, his ideas are applied to child development, psychological as well as physical and social.[27] A number of researchers have expanded this discussion to include how disabilities affect affordances.[28]

### 1.3 Musical Affordances and Mediation

Although not directly related to musical experience, much of Gibson's work with visual perception can be applied to musical perception. Certainly, many of the tenets of the ecological approach line up with my claims about active listener participation in music and the importance of each individual listening situation. Just as there are no affordances without an observer, there is similarly no musical experience without a listener. Each musical experience is a specific *listener's* experience. Listeners therefore play a crucial role in the musical process and, indeed, in the very existence of music.[29]

When affordances are applied to musical experience rather than visual perception, listeners become mandatory, as they take on the role of perceivers. Affordances of an object depend on a perceiver's situation. They do not exist without a perceiver. In the same way, affordances of a musical passage depend on a listener's situation. They do not exist without a listener. Musical sounds can exist without a listener, just as an object can exist without a perceiver present. But the affordances of musical

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[24] For example, see Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, 26.
[25] See Ed Baggs, "A Radical Empiricist Theory of Speaking: Linguistic Meaning Without Conventions," *Ecological Psychology* 27, no. 3 (August 2015): 251–64.
[26] Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, 285–6.
[27] A representative example of a discussion of affordances in relation to empirical work on physical and perceptual development is Peter B. Pufall and Christine Dunbar, "Perceiving Whether or Not the World Affords Stepping Onto and Over: A Developmental Study," *Ecological Psychology* 4, no. 1 (1992): 17–38. For a demonstration of how social development can take affordances into account, see Harry Heft, "Places: Widening the Scope of an Ecological Approach to Perception-Action with an Emphasis on Child Development," *Ecological Psychology* 30, no. 1 (March 2018): 99–123, https://doi.org/1040-7413.
[28] Autism is commonly studied with regard to affordances, such as the work of Katherine A. Loveland in "Social Affordances and Interaction II: Autism and the Affordances of the Human Environment," *Ecological Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1991): 99–119.
[29] An extensive discussion of the ontology of music can be found in Chapter 2.

experiences are like those of objects in the physical environment; they afford certain uses *to someone* and cannot exist otherwise.

Although it may be tempting to consider that what a musical work affords depends solely on the piece itself, the theory of affordances requires that a piece afford different experiences to different people, depending on the person. This piece would also afford different experiences to the same person in new situations. Affordances depend both on the properties of objects (in this case, musical works) and the needs and environments of perceivers (in this case, listeners). In this way, Gibsonian affordances provide an appropriate framework from which to consider the necessity of aspects of listeners as well as elements of musical compositions in musical experiences.

Music scholars have not been as affected by Gibson's research as those in the fields of visual perception, linguistics, sociology, and psychology have; but in recent years, several scholars have begun to explore potential applications of affordances to musical concerns. Affordances can provide a model for music cognition.[30] They can be used to evaluate music technology.[31] They can help us understand audience reception of electronic music and provide insights for its performance.[32] Affordances can also help explain jazz improvisation and relate errors in improvisation to learning and the improviser's environment.[33]

I argue that affordances can also function effectively in music-analytic situations, and a few other scholars are proponents of this concept. Currently, Eric Clarke is one of the most prominent of these. He explores the application of the ecological approach to music at length in several recent publications, highlighting listening situations. His way of studying listening combines empirical work with individual

[30] Marilyn Nonken, "An Ecological Approach to Music Perception: Stimulus-Driven Listening and the Complexity Repertoire" (Columbia University, 1999).
[31] Adam Patrick Bell, "Can We Afford These Affordances?: GarageBand and the Double-Edged Sword of the Digital Audio Workstation," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 14, no. 1 (April 2015): 44–65.
[32] Garth Paine, "Towards Unified Design Guidelines for New Interfaces for Musical Expression," *Organised Sound* 14, no. 2 (August 2009): 142–55.
[33] Stefan Love, "An Ecological Description of Jazz Improvisation," *Psychomusicology* 27, no. 1 (March 2017): 31–44.

and subjective experiences. He asserts that all listening comes from some bias, and he attempts to provide a framework within which to understand music listening in its cultural context.[34] The goal of his book *Ways of Listening* "is to discuss the ways in which listeners interact with the general auditory, and more specifically musical, environment: to discuss listening to music as the continuous awareness of meaning, by considering musical materials in relation to perceptual capacities."[35] Clarke continually brings up action by listeners as a core component of the ecological approach to music.[36] He separates himself from most other scholars in that he focuses on the process of how musical experiences occur the way they do.[37]

My work is similar to Clarke's in many ways, but he incorporates more aspects of Gibson's ecological theory into his approach than I do, putting special emphasis on social considerations.[38] What I consider to be the most significant difference between our methods, however, is that Clarke gives only one analytical reading of each example, whereas I provide multiple ones. Clark's analyses are provocative and insightful, but they do not demonstrate how different listening situations can alter musical affordances.

Ruth Herbert suggests Gibson's ecological approach as one of several theoretical alternatives in her article "Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life."[39] Each alternative she presents focuses on the act of listening as its central goal. She offers several reasons to apply affordances to analyses of listening experiences. One is that affordances can account for the many aspects of a listening situation that shape the experience. Another is that they allow listening experiences to be unique and personal. A third reason is that affordances frame listeners as active participants in their experiences.[40] These are the main reasons that I have chosen to frame my analysis in this document in

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[34] Clarke, "What's Going On: Music, Psychology, and Ecological Theory," 336–7.
[35] Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*, 5.
[36] Clarke, 62.
[37] Clarke, 6–7.
[38] Clarke, "What's Going On: Music, Psychology, and Ecological Theory," 338–40.
[39] Herbert also explains the ecological approach ever so briefly in Ruth Herbert, *Everyday Music Listening: Absorption, Dissociation and Trancing* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 17–8.
[40] Herbert, "Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life."

terms of affordances, too. Herbert does not directly apply her ideas to analytical examples, but I intend to further exemplify them by doing just that.

Another scholar who promotes the use of affordances in music scholarship is Tia DeNora. In her book *After Adorno*, she uses affordance-based language to discuss how musical works are perceived. Although, according to her explanation, affordances change based on how listeners respond to musical situations and act on them, her language suggests that she believes the piece plays a more integral role in the emergence of affordances. Musical works influence their perception: "Musical texts, or, more broadly, musical materials, are by no means neutral."[41] Her definition of what music affords is "what music makes possible;"[42] in other words, affordances emerge from the piece. The role of the musical work is brought to the fore, even when speaking about listeners. Certain ways of thinking and acting are allowed by musical material,[43] although she simultaneously asserts that listeners' actions and situations also influence musical affordances.[44] In a later essay, DeNora again mentions affordances and their use in sociological terms. Here her explanation is much clearer and more balanced, although still without emphasis on listeners: "With regard to music, affordances for emotional experience emerge from the interactions between actors, materials (musical and other), and conventions of use."[45]

In her recent dissertation, Cora Palfy uses ecological theory and affordances to facilitate a discussion of social agency. Like mine, her work deals with experience, but she concerns herself with psychological implications much more than I do.[46] She appreciates the framework of affordances,

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[41] Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44. I do agree that musical aspects of a piece influence affordances. However, DeNora emphasizes the role of the musical work, and I emphasize the role of listeners.
[42] DeNora, 46.
[43] DeNora, 46–8, 58.
[44] DeNora, 50.
[45] Tia DeNora, "Emotion as Social Emergence: Perspectives from Music Sociology," in *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, ed. Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 165.
[46] Cora Suzanne Palfy, "Musical Agency as Intersubjective Phenomenon" (Northwestern University, 2015), 60, 65.

because it "embraces a variety of listening types and meaningful interpretations without privileging one listener over another."[47]

Much of Palfy's discussion revolves around agential properties of musical works. She takes issue with the passivity of objects in Gibson's theory and instead explains how musical works should be conceived of as dynamic agents.[48] Although she grapples with many of the tough questions surrounding application of affordances to musical situations, Palfy does not often explicitly apply affordances to musical analysis.

In 2012, W. Luke Windsor and Christophe de Bézenac published an article that advocates for the application of Gibsonian affordances to musical situations. Their approach differs slightly from the others I have mentioned in that it focuses on how affordances help illuminate the link between perception and action.[49] Windsor and de Bézenac appropriately highlight the changing nature of affordances, since they are dependent on the qualities and needs of a perceiver.[50] Most of their thoughts revolve around physical actions and movement of performers and listeners. They devote only a small section to non-physical changes in listeners, which they refer to as passive. They acknowledge the importance of examining such events, but they claim that such an examination is "problematic" because these responses are internal rather than part of an external ecology.[51] I believe these problems arise from their narrow definition of "action" to only include external physical actions. Because musical experience is largely internal—psychological, cognitive, emotional—a more open definition of "action" to include reactions and changes to these types of states seems appropriate. I expound more on this in the following section.

In response to the work of the music scholars and analysts I have just examined, I provide the following clarification of how I define affordances in relation to music analysis. The analyses in Chapters

[47] Palfy, 60–1.
[48] Palfy, 69–74.
[49] W. Luke Windsor and Christophe de Bézenac, "Music and Affordances," *Musicae Scientiae* 16, no. 1 (March 2012): 102–03.
[50] Windsor and de Bézenac, 104.
[51] Windsor and de Bézenac, 114–15.

3, 4, and 5 are meant to serve as a model for the practical application of the concepts related to musical affordances: individual experience, mediation, multiple equal interpretations, and active listeners.

### 1.4 Affordances and Mediation in Analysis

My particular interest in affordances is how they can be used directly in music analysis. Since my goal in this document is to start a conversation about subjective listening experiences and suggest how they can be incorporated into analysis, I am open to new ways to frame analysis that take listeners' experiences into account. Musical affordances allow each listening experience to be nuanced. If an analysis focuses on affordances created between listeners and pieces, rather than solely on musical elements, then it creates a necessity for listeners to be acknowledged as active participants in their own experiences, and it explains why every experience is different.

In order to apply affordances to music analysis, I will first explain some details of Gibson's visual theory and how they can be interpreted to fit musical situations. As I have explained, Gibsonian affordances are described as properties of an object that present a potential for use by a perceiver. I am especially interested in this aspect of Gibson's theory, because this means that affordances cannot exist without a perceiver (animal or person). The parallel I make with musical experiences is that musical affordances are properties of a piece that present a potential for some kind of use by a listener. Just as affordances of objects can only exist when a perceiver is present, so affordances of musical pieces can only exist when a listener is present. Musical affordances, by this definition, require listeners to be part of the process.

Gibson's theory is an ecological theory, which means that affordances to him only exist when objects are within an ecology. In other words, affordances always exist within a context or situation. This is true of music as well. Musical affordances are not just properties of sound. They exist as part of a situation, in a context, transforming sound into music.[52] This is why the same sounds could exist without projecting the same affordances, because the context would be different. My reaction to a song that I use

[52] Some of this context is not provided by listeners, but, importantly, some of it is.

as an alarm in the morning is different than when I hear that same song on the radio. In fact, my reaction to that song on the radio is different than it used to be before I began using it as an alarm. A recording of a piece playing to a dog in an otherwise empty room affords certain experiences to the dog, but it does not afford human emotions like it would in a different setting.

What Gibson refers to as the environment or ecology, I refer to as a musical situation. I make this distinction because we are not only talking about the physical world when we are talking about musical experience. The term "situation" is meant to encompass the entire context of listeners and what they bring to the experience, the piece, the mode of transmission of sound, the physical environment, the mental and emotional states of listeners, and the specific point in time.

Windsor and de Bézenac refer to affordances as existing in the relationship between object and perceiver,[53] and I agree with that. Affordances can only happen when there is both an object and a perceiver (or both a piece and a listener). So although a statement such as "this piece affords listeners a sense of calmness" seems to imply that pieces are active and listeners are passive, it is essential to bear in mind that listeners are also active components in each situation.[54] When a piece and a listener connect, only then do affordances exist.

Part of the problem with the language surrounding affordances is that affordances indicate potential for action, not action itself. Affordances do not "do" anything; they provide a possibility for something to be done. Talking about actions of listeners is actually a step beyond affordances. Asking what listeners perceive is what evokes affordances. An action is a response to an affordance, which could not be possible without the affordance.

Musical affordances do not necessarily involve *physical* action from listeners, although this is one possibility. Windsor and de Bézenac emphasize action in their discussion of listeners, such as tapping a foot, dancing, turning one's head, and getting up to adjust volume on a stereo.[55] This emphasis comes from their attempt to link perception and action together as a psychological concept. My interpretation is

[53] Windsor and de Bézenac, "Music and Affordances," 104.
[54] For a more involved discussion of language involving affordances, see Chapter 2.
[55] Windsor and de Bézenac, "Music and Affordances," 112.

slightly different. In my view of musical affordances, the term "action" encapsulates more than just physical movement. It also includes mental, cognitive, and emotional changes—any phenomena that listeners can feel or that affect the state of listeners in some way. To broaden the way we can talk about these issues in light of musical experience, I include "reaction" with "action" as potentials that grow from affordances. In my usage here, I will refer to "reaction" as mainly an involuntary response to musical situations and "action" as a more intentional one. Both acting and reacting are natural outcomes of many musical affordances and can manifest themselves in physical, mental, psychological, cognitive, and emotional ways.

There are likely many affordances in most listening situations, but listener responses use a specific subset of these affordances. For example, when I am tired, a pillow affords me both resting my head and napping. I can choose which affordance to act upon, and I may even choose one over the other involuntarily. In short, each piece generally has a number of affordances for a specific listener in a specific situation. This listener may choose (voluntarily or involuntarily) to act on (or react to) some of these and not others. In analysis, we can talk both about affordances, potentials for action that lie in the interaction between piece and listener within a certain situation, and actions or reactions, responses to those affordances which grow from their potential.

Some properties of objects are invariant. In my pillow analogy, the size, weight, thickness, and color of the pillow are more or less invariant. Since it is made of flexible materials, it can be molded into different shapes or squished into different densities, but its relative size and weight would not change. The color may fade over time, but it would not change perceptibly between two experiences within hours of each other. Pieces also have invariant properties, especially in reference to a single specific performance. If I listen to the same recording of a piece through the same medium (i.e., a certain pair of headphones), some properties of the piece should remain invariant: pitches, rhythm, tempo, timbre, tuning. The scores used to learn and perform the piece have invariant properties, as do the instruments that created the sounds. The recording equipment and my headphones do, too. Invariant qualities tend to be physical qualities that cannot easily change, such as shape, size and weight of objects—or shape and

size of sound waves. In my interpretation of musical affordances, I generally attribute these invariant properties to the piece.[56]

Most of the variable qualities between different listenings, then, reside in the listener. Because listeners are people, alive and sentient,[57] they are dynamic beings, always changing. So every interaction with a piece is necessarily unique, causing musical affordances to constantly change as well. Even though many experiences involving the same piece and listener are extremely similar, no two experiences can ever be the same.[58]

Part of the reason for this, as I mentioned earlier, is that time is always a variable factor of a listener's situation that affects affordances in a dynamic way. For the purpose of many of my analyses in this document, I refer to somewhat static or frozen moments in time. But these moments are themselves situated on a continuum of time. Certainly, some broad affordances might not be affected by time. For example, in my Beethoven's Fifth Symphony example, I always have a bit of my father's rendition in the back of my mind when I experience this piece. But even with that, I maintain that every time is still different, either in the intensity of that effect or in the other aspects of my experience.

One aspect of Gibson's theory that is somewhat problematic to apply to music is his emphasis on the "needs" of perceivers. Affordances are tied up in what a perceiver needs from an object; a perceiver's needs dictate possible actions and help determine which affordances are best to act upon. Although we do not always talk about music in this way, there are instances when listeners need music. When we listen to music on purpose, it is because we need it in some way. Musicians might listen because they need to learn more about a certain piece or composer, to study for an exam, to inform their own practice and performance, or to work on an analysis. Someone who is driving might need to stay alert or stave off

[56] Windsor and de Bézenac find invariants in musical affordances to be particularly problematic, because they tie them to musical sounds that might "specify events and objects." I do not believe this level of meaning-making needs to be connected to the concept of invariants. Listeners may not directly perceive or recognize an invariant, but their experiences are still affected by invariants involved in the musical process. See Windsor and de Bézenac, "Music and Affordances," 106.

[57] An argument can certainly be made for animals as listeners. In this document, however, I am only referring to humans and how affordances can be applied to their musical experiences.

[58] In this way, a musical experience is similar to a snowflake or a batch of homemade salsa.

boredom. Listeners who are exercising might need music to help keep up their pace or to distract from their physical discomfort. Dancers need music to help them dance, not only because of rhythm but also because of expression. Often, people intentionally experience music because they need to lift their mood, relax, wake up, work through their emotions, or release their emotions in a cathartic experience. Sometimes a listener may need music to feel less alone. Throughout history, religious listeners have needed music as part of worship services and rituals. People also need music in social situations, such as concerts, dances, and clubs, to provide a sense of connection and community.

It is especially important at this point to clarify what a "need" is. Listeners may not "need" musical experience for survival in the same way that they need air, water, food, shelter, physical safety, and medical attention. But they need music *in order to* achieve something or reach a certain psychological or emotional state. Listeners might also just need musical experience, without knowing exactly what that experience will afford them. And unexpected or unintentional listening situations can fulfill similar needs that perhaps listeners did not recognize or prioritize at the time.

By acknowledging musical affordances, we are acknowledging listeners' imperative role in creating music. With this understanding, we can analyze why and how experiences differ. Some answers can be found by examining pieces. But I have shown through this more in-depth definition of musical affordances that this is not enough to truly understand how the potential for certain actions and reactions are determined. We must also examine listeners.

When we ask how affordances arise and why they differ from situation to situation, part of what we are determining is the type and degree of mediation. Musical sounds only make sense to us as such once we perceive and process them in some way. Otherwise, they are just sounds. They only become music through our interaction with them.[59]

We might mediate our musical experiences through our different levels and types of musical education or prior experience with a piece. For example, my training as a music theorist will mediate my experience with an oboe concerto differently than if I had been trained as a professional oboist. Similarly,

[59] See my discussion of the ontology of music in Chapter 2.

oboists who have played the concerto would mediate their experiences differently than oboists who have never played it. "Musical" activities such as counting or following a score can mediate experience, but generally only for people who understand how to do these actions in meaningful ways.[60] Similarly, score study and other "scholarly" activities can mediate experience in different ways that are highly dependent on the abilities and knowledge of a listener. Marking a score, taking notes, drawing pictures, creating timelines and diagrams, recording thoughts and emotions, and marking phrases can mediate experience in specific fruitful ways, as can labeling scale degrees, harmonies, non-chord tones, keys, modulations, and cadence types. Most musicians, including myself, consider these types of mediation to be essential to listening and performing with a high level of musicality, which is why we teach such skills in university courses and private lessons.[61] Various types of bodily movement can also play a role in mediation.[62] Even non-musicians who have an inherent understanding of meter can mediate experiences of meter by tapping a foot or bobbing their heads. Listeners who have studied conducting, even at a rudimentary level, can take this a step further by conducting along with a performance. Swaying, dancing, clapping, humming, and the like are all physical actions that can mediate a musical experience. Additionally, both attention and expectation can be somewhat complex vehicles of mediation, as they themselves are often products of a combination of factors such as prior experience, musical knowledge, movement, and focus. These two types of mediation are broken down and explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

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[60] It is possible that listeners' experiences could be mediated by these actions even without understanding their musical significance or application, but the resulting affordances would be difficult to predict and examine.

[61] Even though music education, particularly at the university level, prioritizes these skills and certain types of listening, this does not mean that other types of listening are invalid or without value. It simply means that other types of listening are insufficient for the work of professional classical musicians in today's world. Generally, music academics agree that listening mediated in these "scholarly" ways will afford students the ability to succeed as professional performers, composers, educators, and theorists. This is why it is possible to discuss and value all types of listening while still teaching music students to listen in specific ways, without doing so hypocritically.

[62] An entire body of literature devoted to the role of movement and the body in musical experience exists. While I do not address it in depth in the present study, it is a significant aspect of experience. The ties between my ideas in this document and musical embodiment deserve consideration as an important future project.

Mediation can be thought of as a variant aspect of affordance. It is affected by those characteristics of piece, situation, and listener that can change between hearings. Therefore, it is also somewhat fluid. How we mediate our experiences affects what affordances are available for us. Mediation is highly personal, as the factors I have outlined demonstrate. This explains part of why affordances can be so varied from listening to listening or from listener to listener. Throughout my analyses, I identify not only musical affordances in various experiential situations, but also the type of mediation that could help shape these affordances. My analyses in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 use these ideas to highlight the interaction between pieces and listeners and explain possible listener-centric causes for experience.

### 1.5 Using Corelli's Works

To demonstrate the impact listeners have on their own experiences, I analyze various selections from the chamber works of Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713). Although Corelli's music may not immediately come to mind as emotionally rich, and therefore not particularly vibrant for experiential analysis, I show that it can be incredibly emotionally compelling in a number of scenarios.[63] There are those who argue that absolute music in general does not elicit active engagement, because text is necessary for musical meaning.[64] However, there are several reasons that I believe that Corelli's music is not only acceptable for highlighting various experiences but, in fact, especially appropriate.

First, Corelli composed at a time when affect in music was especially noticed and desired. The historical context from which Corelli worked suggests that his compositions were intended to have

[63] Many of the experiences I analyze are explicitly emotional, which is why I include a defense of the emotional nature of Corelli's music. However, although the lines between experience and emotion are sometimes blurred, not all experiences that I discuss in this document have a clear emotional component. Herbert has asserted the importance of not always framing the discussion of subjective experiences in emotional terms; and although there is still plenty of work that needs to be done regarding subjective emotions, I do not intend for emotion to be my main focus here. See Herbert, "Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life."

[64] Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*, 10–11.

emotional meaning. In the Baroque Era, rhetoric was upheld as a model for musical composition. The goal of rhetoric at this time was to move the audience, and music followed this trend.[65]

Second, Corelli's work is largely free from explicit textual, topical, or narrative associations, making it ideal for an examination of subjective listener experiences. Often, scholars use Romantic music to demonstrate various experiences and to provide emotional accounts. However, most Romantic pieces have some sort of extramusical material to guide listeners to certain meanings and experiences. Most listeners would be hard pressed to experience this music without mediating it through extramusical associations. This is not to say that listeners cannot have differing experiences with Romantic music, but the music of Corelli leaves plenty of room for various interpretations.

What I provide in my analyses is not in any way a comprehensive approach to Corelli's oeuvre. While they highlight what listeners bring to their experiences, they are not meant in any way to address all aspects of the pieces. Additionally, I do not think that my approach to these selections is the only appropriate way or even the best way to approach Corelli's compositions. In order to fully understand the works of Corelli, we should examine them from many points of view. My point of view is only one of these approaches that we should consider when learning more about Corelli and his output, but it is a crucial one. To enhance our understanding and appreciation of music, we should embrace the multiplicity of ideas and expertise that the field of music theory has to offer. Finally, my intention in using the examples I have chosen is to provide a model for analysis. I believe this model can be applied to a diverse

[65] Gregory G. Butler, "The Projection of Affect in Baroque Dance Music," *Early Music* 12, no. 2 (May 1984): 201. Additionally, Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* of 1650 cites the movement of passions as a primary goal of music and asks questions about the nature of the affections that are moved by music. See Claude V. Palisca, *Music and Ideas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 193–4. Johann Mattheson's writings, especially *Der Volkommene Capellmeister*, contain specific and detailed instructions for upholding appropriate affections through all aspects of composition. Although Mattheson wrote his treatises a few decades after Corelli began composing, they likely reflected principles that were already in place. See George J. Buelow, "Mattheson, Johann," ed. Deane Root, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, accessed May 25, 2018, http:////www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000018097.

array of musical styles, genres, and composers. I hope that my demonstrations encourage other analysts to apply affordances to musical examples other than the ones in this document.

### 1.6 Goals of a Pluralistic View

In contemplating many interpretations of musical works, it is important to me to consider them all of equal value. There are valid arguments for and against this point, which I fully acknowledge; but in this document, I intentionally approach each experience with the same attitude of acceptance and interest. The methodology I set forth here does not prefer any way of listening or any type of listener. This is a pluralistic view that some other scholars do not share, a point which I expound on in Chapter 2.

Many of my analyses examine my own musical experiences. My aim here is not to assert that any of my own interpretations are the "right" or "best" way to hear a piece. Instead, I wish to open up a dialog about our experiences and the experiences of others. In so doing, I present a shift in analytical focus away from value judgments. Musical experiences are not right or wrong; they just *are*.

As I present some of my own experiences with music and reflect on music's affordances for me in different scenarios, one of my goals is that others will become more comfortable addressing their own subjective experiences. Often, those of us in music academia feel awkward doing this.[66] I see self-reflection as an important first step into this new analytical approach. From here, another goal of mine is that more analysts will consider the potential for inclusion of multiple versions of musical encounters, whether they have personally experienced them or not.

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[66] This quote from Susan McClary especially resonates in regard to such awkwardness: "Now it is quite clear to most listeners that music moves them, that they respond deeply to music in a variety of ways, even though in our society they are told that they cannot know anything about music without having absorbed the whole theoretical apparatus necessary for music specialization. But to learn this apparatus is to learn to renounce one's responses, to discover that the musical phenomenon is to be understood mechanistically, mathematically. Thus non-trained listeners are prevented from talking about social and expressive dimensions of music (for they lack the vocabulary to refer to its parts) and so are trained musicians (for they have been taught, in learning the proper vocabulary, that music is strictly self-contained structure)." Susan McClary, "Afterward: The Politics of Silence and Sound," in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, by Jacques Attali, vol. 16, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 150.

This chapter posed the issue of a general neglect of acknowledgement of listeners in analytical accounts. It asserted that listeners have an active rather than passive role in their listening scenarios. It went on to explain the concept of Gibsonian affordances and how it can be effectively applied to music in order to situate analysis around listeners. It concluded by attempting to erase value judgments from our considerations of others' musical experiences.

Chapter 2 expounds on this last point, digging further into the problems encountered when incorporating subjective musical experiences into analysis. It explores different types of listeners and asks if such a thing as passive listening exists. It delves into an ontology of music, seriously considers how language is used when discussing musical experience, and tackles the problematic issue of hierarchical listener types. Finally, it asks whether analysis can still be held to a standard of rigor if all subjective perspectives are considered equal.

Chapters 3 and 4 set out to provide examples of this methodology in practice. Each musical example is approached from at least two different perspectives. Some analyses reflect experiences I had with the example. Others present hypothetical listeners and situations to consider. Each perspective is viewed through the lens of affordances; that is, every analysis emerges from the philosophical underpinnings of affordances and makes the interaction between piece and listener as its focal point. Chapter 3 examines subjective experiences based on listeners' attention. Chapter 4 does this based on listeners' expectations.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I analyze my own experiences with longer segments of Corelli's works. By tracking personal experiences through portions of op. 3 and all of op. 6/8, I demonstrate a way that we can gain new insights about pieces by directly analyzing our experiences and how they are mediated. These analyses further confront "traditional" analytical approaches by showing how analysis of experience can significantly diverge from analysis that is piece-centric. Rather than viewing this as a conflict, I suggest we embrace these new angles and allow them to challenge our understanding of what analysis can be.

As you read through my analyses, I encourage you to practice self-reflection. Treat this project as an interactive endeavor. Consider listening to the examples I set forth and chart your own course. Take

note of what about *you* influences your own experiences. What affordances do the examples present to you, and what do you bring to the listening situation to help shape those affordances? How do you mediate each experience, and how does this affect the potentials for action and reaction that are available to you? You may even find it fruitful to try to mediate your experiences in different ways and attempt to prompt different affordances. I expect that in some cases your experiences might line up with the ones I offer; and in others, you will likely come up with ideas and interpretations that I never even considered. This does not add or detract from the value of my own personal experiences or the hypothetical ones I pose. Your experiences are not better or worse. They just *are*.

## Chapter 2: Embracing Subjective Listening Experiences

> "And the goal is to create not one but a multiplicity of interpretations because the more choices one has in interpreting events, the more refined and determinate one's awareness of each event can be, and thus the more precisely individual the work is."[1]

### 2.0 The Importance of Subjective Considerations in Analysis

No two listening experiences are exactly the same. Each experience relies not only on musical material, but also on details about listeners, their environment, and a specific point in time when listening occurs. I refer to these properties as together forming "listening situations." If any part of any of these aspects changes, the listening situation is different. This is why the same listener hearing the same recording of the same piece can encounter it in a variety of ways. One of the listenings will occur sometime after the other (a change in time). The recording could be playing through car speakers once, high-quality speakers another time, and headphones a third time (a change in environment). Listeners may find themselves more or less tired, more or less eager to listen, or equipped with a different understanding of the piece, especially after hearing it previously (a change in listener). Any combination of these or other similar factors will necessarily change the listening situation, and therefore the experience.[2]

To talk about experience, to truly delve into how and why each experience is unique, we must not only allow subjective accounts to have a place in our work, but actively seek them out. Marian Guck is something of a pioneer in this task. Much of her work argues that we should embrace subjective

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[1] Marion Guck, "Rigors of Subjectivity," *Perspectives of New Music* 35, no. 2 (June 1997): 53–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/833642, 61.

[2] I argue that even when listeners may not recognize an experience as different from another, it still sustains changes, even if very slight. For example, I could cite how I always have a pleasurable experience when hearing the tenth variation of Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, op. 9. I always find myself pulled into the musical experience and focusing all my attention on the piece. I always get chills. These are the main parts of my experience that I think about when I recall hearing this variation. However, I am claiming that even these factors are nuanced. How pleasurable is my experience? How focused is my attention? How strong are the chills I feel, and how long do they last? Some of these factors are more easily measured than others, but even without collecting empirical data on these points, it is prudent to acknowledge that no two experiences will actually be the same, even if I cannot perceive the differences.

experiences.[3] To be fair, more theorists are accepting of subjective approaches now than they were when she began writing about them, but there is definitely still room for more advancements to be made in this area.[4]

Ultimately, I have a number of goals for a subjective and pluralistic inclination in analysis. First and foremost, I wish to allow for a variety of experiences to be given importance, and to acknowledge that more than one interpretation—or even more than a few—may be equally enlightening. Ideally, this diversity will invite listeners and analysts to approach music in new ways. Second, I think more of our analyses should reflect the nature of actual musical experience, rather than imparting some ideal that may or may not be perceivable to the majority of listeners.[5] In so doing, I hope to also validate listeners who feel that they are somehow wrong in what they are experiencing or in how they are listening.

It is important to remember that while nearly all people are listeners at one time or another, most do not consider themselves musicians. Those who understand enough about music performance, music theory, or music history to inform "musical" interpretations are scarce. Those who have formally studied music are even scarcer. A miniscule percentage of the population achieves graduate degrees in music theory, and yet we are the ones asserting how music can be heard and understood through our analyses. It is not as though any of these assertions are necessarily incorrect, and we are often intentionally writing only for each other. But there is something to be said for an attempt to connect with the majority of those

[3] Marion Guck, "Analytical Fictions," *Music Theory Spectrum* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 217–30; Guck, "Rigors of Subjectivity"; Marion Guck, "Music Loving, Or the Relationship with the Piece," *Music Theory Online* 2, no. 2 (March 1996), http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.96.2.2/toc.2.2.html.

[4] Although this document is largely a response to my own view that the area of subjective scholarly analysis is severely lacking and underrepresented in our presentations, publications, and pedagogy as a field, it does not automatically follow that the field as a whole is against this sort of research. In my own experience speaking with many music theorists from a variety of generations, educational backgrounds, and subdisciplines, I have found overwhelming support and encouragement about this type of analysis and the present research.

[5] I want to clarify again here that not all analyses should consider experience or take a listener's point of view into account. I am only arguing that more analyses should reflect actual musical experience, and that we should not regard them as less scholarly or less important on those grounds alone. In other words, they should be subjected to the same standard as other types of analyses, but they should not be dismissed due to their subjective nature.

who listen, who are not musically trained—to encourage them to communicate their experiences and to help them discover how to do so.

### 2.1 Types of Listeners

There are many types of listeners. Performers can be listeners who are hearing themselves perform. Composers can also be listeners, by hearing their own musical creations playing in their heads. Both of these particular listening positions mediate potential listening situations through the dual role of listener and creator. These roles are inextricably linked in such situations and certainly affect the particular types of affordances that arise.

Because of the special directions that these affordances take, my focus in this document is not on performer-listeners or composer-listeners, but rather on a more traditional view of what a listener is—one whose main relationship to the music is only through listening.[6] Even these listeners who are not involved in the creation of musical sounds may hear music in a wide variety of ways that affect their perspective. Listeners listen in person while musicians in close proximity to them perform live; they also listen from a distance (such as through live streaming, television, or radio). Often, listening situations occur after a performance through audio and video recordings. Such performances can be revisited many times, which allows for a study such as this one, where the exact same performance of a piece can be part of many different experiences.[7] It is these recorded performances that I address in this document.

My analyses in Chapters 3–4 and especially Chapter 5 are mainly based on my own listening experiences. Nevertheless, my aim is to present a series of possible listening situations to demonstrate the cause and effect of various affordances. In order to consider a wider range of listener types, I also include

[6] In some instances, especially when referring to my own experiences, I do consider the particular perspective of the analyst-listener.

[7] Listening can also happen in the mind, where it is a product of the mind rather than of physical sounds. Listeners who have previously heard a performance of a piece may be able to recall how it sounded at the time of the physical listening situation and reconstruct it in their minds more or less accurately. A musician with strong aural skills may be able to "listen" to a piece simply by looking at the score. I consider both of these to be listening situations. However, due to the cognitive and philosophical complexities involved in researching listening without physical sounds, and the constraints of the present document, I do not investigate this type of listening in my analyses.

hypothetical listeners. My hypothetical listeners are not actual people that I know or have studied, although they may be tangentially based on listeners I have observed. However, I carefully contemplate each hypothetical listening situation in the same way I examine my own experiences. What is it about each listener and listening situation that causes variants in experience? What does each listener bring to his or her own experience in order to create music?

Recently, several prominent publications have emphasized the importance of studying music from the perspective of a historical listener, a typical listener at the time the works in question were composed. For example, Robert Gjerdingen's innovations through schema theory seek to rebuild our understanding of how eighteenth-century listeners would hear the music of their day. Part of his argument is that listeners of today will never be able to fully hear galant music the way contemporary listeners did, because we view everything through a nineteenth-century lens. But his evidence-based explanations of how listeners used to process music helps twenty-first-century listeners move a little closer to having similar experiences.[8]

Studies of historical listeners are valuable and enlightening. They can help us understand the context for how pieces were composed, performed, and heard at the time. Since I am examining Baroque pieces, one might assume that I rely on historical listeners. While this would be a fruitful and interesting study, it is not the focus of the current research. Instead, I work with present-day listeners. My analyses are concerned more with how listeners of today affect their musical experiences than with how Corelli's contemporaries affected theirs. Centering my analyses around current listening situations (even when hypothetical) will go further toward my goal of reaching and validating a variety of today's listeners.

One aspect of listening that is sometimes debated is whether the listening in question is active or passive. I do not believe there is such a thing as passive listening. When people listen, they are doing so actively. Even if they do not realize they are listening, if their mind is processing musical sounds, they are involved with music in an active way. If listeners are truly being "passive," then I do not consider them

[8] Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

listeners. Sound waves vibrating an ear drum do not constitute music. A listener who actively perceives those sounds and interprets them as musical is a necessary part of the listening equation.

Instead of a dichotomy between active and passive listening, I prefer to think of active listening on a spectrum. Sometimes we listen on purpose in a certain way; sometimes music seems to control us. Sometimes we approach music with as much of an open mind as possible, to allow it to guide us; sometimes we barely pay attention at all, and music acts as background filler. We might put on a recording intentionally, or we might subconsciously be listening to music over the speakers at the grocery store. We could plot all these instances of listening on a continuum from "weak active listening" to "strong active listening," but all of them involve listeners in active roles.[9]

**2.2 An Ontology of Music**

The acknowledgement of a multiplicity of listeners, listening situations, and their implications has led me to reconsider the ontology of music. I do not consider a score or even a performance of a piece to be the entirety of what music is. To put it another way, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, "If a recording of a string quartet plays in a forest, and no one is around to hear it, is it really music?" My answer is that this is sound, not music. It does not become music until someone hears those sounds and they are mediated by everything that a particular listener brings to the situation at a specific moment in time.

Each instance of listening to a piece is unique. This means that all the factors of the score, performance, listening environment, listener, and time of listening combine to create a singular experience. Music lies in the intersection between all possible forms of a piece (scores, performances, etc.) and all possible forms of a listener in a listening situation (background, environment, point in time, preferences, musical knowledge, etc.) (Figure 2.1).

[9] For more on the debate on active and passive listening, see Ruth Herbert, "Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life," *Journal of Sonic Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a05.

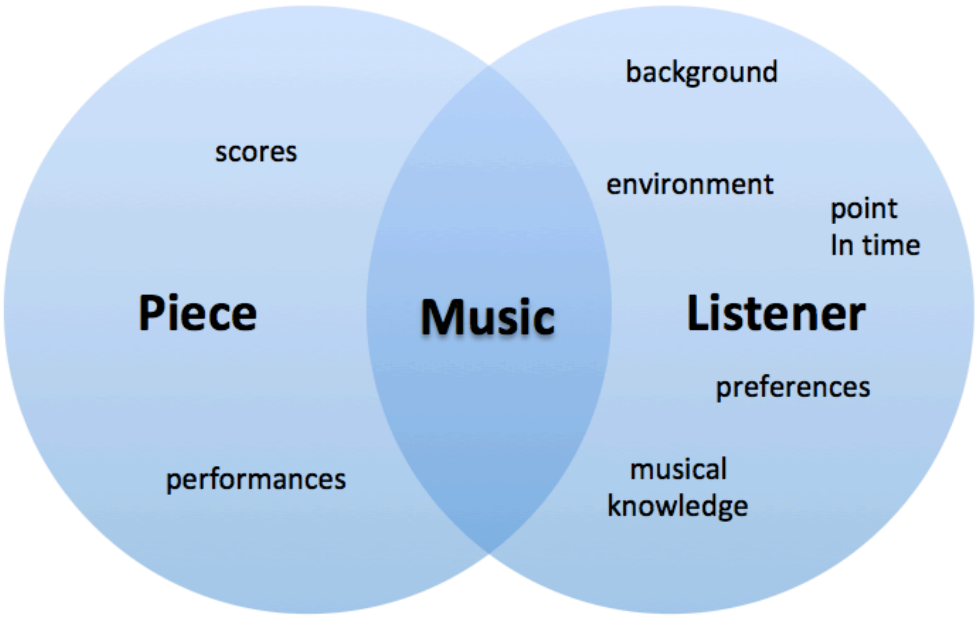


**Figure 2.1.** Music exists in the intersection between piece and listener.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, affordances help us examine music from this perspective. Because affordances are tied up in both the object's traits and the potential user, including all aspects of the user's current environment, they necessitate the perspective that the state of being of the object is (at least partly) dependent on the user. To demonstrate, I will go back to my pillow analogy. If I put a pillow under my head and fall asleep at night, not only does the pillow afford my head support, but it also *becomes* a propping device. But, the next day, if I place the same pillow on my lap under my laptop, it *becomes* a makeshift desk. The pillow has changed. Although it looks the same and bears the same invariant physical properties in both circumstances, its affordances to me are different. Therefore, the object *in its relationship to me* is different.

I am asserting that music changes along with its affordances in much the same way. Musical affordances depend on a particular listener in a certain listening situation at a specific moment in time. Therefore, in any given circumstance, at any moment in time, music will be unique. The same recording will afford different music to me when I am studying it for analysis than when I am listening to it during a

road trip. Using the concepts of affordances and mediation to describe the change in music between varying situations brings to light the richness of the interaction between piece and listener. It can help us as analysts describe how music arises from this interaction.

In his book *Music and Discourse*, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Nattiez provides another helpful way of thinking about the intersection of piece and listener. Near the beginning of the book, he argues that semiology is different from communication.[10] Whereas we *receive* communication, we *construct* meaning, a wording that denotes an active role.[11] His simple figure of communication (reproduced in Figure 2.2) demonstrates his interpretation of this process.

"Producer" → Message → Receiver

**Figure 2.2.** Nattiez's conception of communication.[12]

We could imagine this easily translated into "communication" of a musical work from composer or performer to listener (Figure 2.3). This conception of the transmitting of musical ideas seems to underlie the majority of current analysis. In this view, listeners play a passive role, and composers, performers, and pieces act on them.

Composer/Performer → Piece → Listener

**Figure 2.3.** Passive "reception" of a musical work.

However, Nattiez suggests a change in arrow direction that transforms a simple message into what he calls a "trace," a perceivable form from which meaning can be extracted.[13] How receivers

[10] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 16.
[11] Nattiez, 12.
[12] Nattiez, 16.

construct meaning "is heavily dependent upon [their] lived experience."[14] Figure 2.4 (reproduced from Nattiez) shows what happens when a receiver takes on an active role in the process. Instead of a direct line from producer to receiver, both sides play a part in constructing meaning, transforming the message into a trace.

"Producer" → Trace ← Receiver

**Figure 2.4.** Nattiez's conception of meaning making.[15]

If we apply this idea to listening, we can change passive reception of a piece of music into active meaning making. I argue that, like the transformation of "message" into "trace," acknowledgement of listeners' active role transforms a "musical work" into "music." (Figure 2.5)

Composer/Performer → Music ← Listener

**Figure 2.5.** Active construction of musical meaning.

Since I have argued that all listening is active, and that music only truly exists when a listener is involved, I actually consider Figure 2.3 to be impossible. In the case of no listener, such as a musical recording playing in an empty room, there can be no construction of meaning and therefore no music, only sound. Figure 2.6 demonstrates this process. Note that music is not actualized without a listener. If composers or performers are present, they become listeners, and the process demonstrated in Figure 2.5 would occur. Figure 2.6 can only happen when no one is listening, which means it cannot occur during a live performance.

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[13] Nattiez, 12.
[14] Nattiez, 12.
[15] Nattiez, 17.

Composer/Performer → Piece (*not* music)

**Figure 2.6.** A musical work presented without an active listener.

This definition of music is strikingly similar to the way I defined musical affordances in Chapter 1. Just as music resides in the intersection between piece and listener, so musical affordances also reside in this space. It stands to reason, therefore, that music and affordances are inseparable. Music cannot exist without affordances, as affordances arise when listeners interact with pieces. In the same way, affordances by definition exist as the potential for musical experience. Musical affordances provide this potential for listeners.

Since music is only present in the active connection between listeners and pieces, we can say that music exists when listeners act on or react to musical affordances. In other words, *musical experience is music*. Music is more than the piece; it requires a listener. And when listeners mediate the sound they perceive in such a way as to interpret it as musical sound, the piece affords them a musical experience. When listeners mediate sound in particular ways, the piece affords them music.

### 2.3 The Use of Language

To properly discuss music as defined in this way, we must be mindful with the language we use. One of the main ways I encourage a shift toward listener-centric analysis is through a shift in language. My analyses in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 intentionally use language that accentuates the active role of listeners. Listeners take active verbs instead of passive, and their experiences are recognized as the product of affordances that they themselves help create. Similarly, language can highlight the way music emerges from various listening situations. When listeners are given a prominent place in analysis, this modification in language can emphasize how and why music changes.

The language I use in analysis is more than an adjustment of how I write; it reflects a fundamental change of focus. Guck demonstrates how analysts' views are betrayed by our language in her article

"Analytical Fictions." She goes through three analyses by different authors and demonstrates how each author's relationship to the analysis is framed differently. The theoretical language they use gives away their subjective stances and preconceptions.[16]

A shift to language that acknowledges mediation and affordances can communicate the same analytical ideas while putting the emphasis on an active listener. Consider the following passage by Dennis Libby:

> "Are we now to take it as significant when the beginning of this sequence turns up again in the finale of Op. III, No. 5, a sequence that was only hinted at in the corresponding place (mm. 20–21) in the first allegro of that piece? For the listener who knows Corelli's music well, the passage is such a stereotyped one that it becomes difficult for him to make the specific reference required here, if he is meant to hear what happened in the largo as influencing the final allegro at this point. This is the problem that arises from the presence of both these kinds of relationships in this music."[17]

We could reword this analytical passage to make the same point about the work, while acknowledging more of an active role played by listeners:

> "Are we now to take it as significant when the beginning of this sequence turns up again in the finale of Op. III, No. 5, a sequence that was only hinted at in the corresponding place (mm. 20–21) in the first allegro of that piece? For listeners who know Corelli's music well, this passage may not afford them the specific reference required to hear what happened in the largo as influencing the final allegro at this point. Since the passage is such a stereotyped one, it is likely that listeners' attention would not especially linger on this moment. Therefore, their attention would not mediate the experience in such a way as to afford them deep enough reflection to consider this a significant connection."

If we stop to consider listeners who are not well-versed in Corelli's style, we can imagine how their experience could be completely different:

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[16] Guck, "Analytical Fictions."
[17] Dennis Libby, "Interrelationships in Corelli," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 286.

> "Are we now to take it as significant when the beginning of this sequence turns up again in the finale of Op. III, No. 5, a sequence that was only hinted at in the corresponding place (mm. 20–21) in the first allegro of that piece? Although this passage is such a stereotyped one for listeners who know Corelli's music well, it may not afford the same kind of experience to listeners who do not. The passage is novel to them, and they would not mediate their experiences with 'baggage' from prior experiences with Corelli's music. Suppose these listeners attend to sequences in Corelli's music because they are predisposed to expect them. They would likely mediate their experience through attention to sequences and lack of understanding of Corelli's style, which could in turn afford them an experience where they hear the connection between the movements as significant and meaningful."

Even though how we use language to demonstrate our points is so important, it is especially difficult to do so when writing about experience. There is an unavoidable crudeness in language any time subjective encounters are discussed. Some feelings and experiences are not represented well by words, and it can often seem that the limitations of the written or spoken word cannot fully encompass the experience.[18] Philip V. Bohlman puts it well when he says, "Speaking about music is extraordinarily difficult; yet music is interwoven with few human activities as inseparably as language."[19] Perhaps this tension between the disparity and yet interwovenness between language and music contributes to the discomfort some experience when approaching subjective accounts.[20]

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[18] This is demonstrated by subjects in empirical studies about music and emotion, where language can be a barrier to understanding. Words allow subjects to describe their subjective experiences, but they sometimes cause difficulties due to personal limitations and the imprecise nature of language about experience. Occasionally, researchers will construct non-verbal methods of reporting to try to account for the disconnect between emotions and language. See Marcel Zentner and Tuomas Eerola, "Self-Report Measures and Models," in *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, ed. Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 187–222.

[19] Philip V. Bohlman, "Ontologies of Music," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25.

[20] Although experience does not always translate well into language, some scholars believe that music and language are inextricably linked. For example, Lawrence Kramer does not believe that language is a barrier against musical experience. Instead, he argues that one cannot engage with music apart from language, because language and culture are always intrinsic to musical experience. In some ways, this assertion lines up with my view of the interconnection of score, performance, listener, listening situation, and so on. Language is part of a listener, and therefore part of the musical experience. See Lawrence Kramer, "Subjectivity Unbound: Music, Language, Culture," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 396.

If we are not careful, our language when talking about listeners can sometimes sound pretentious, especially to listeners who are not musicians and may already feel timid about expressing their thoughts about musical experience. I doubt that most of us intend to come across this way, but it is something we must guard against if we wish to broaden our impact. When discussing a multiplicity of interpretations on an equal playing field, language is immensely important in communicating that no listener is better than another. The language of affordances helps us do this by connecting subjective experiences with musical "objects." Gibsonian affordances put subjective experiences front and center without a value judgment.

Because this is a written document, I cannot avoid language and therefore must grapple with its limitations. However, the words I use are carefully chosen to reflect the attitude toward music, analysis, and listeners that I am proposing. Since I wish to focus on a specific goal for analysis, then I must ensure that my language serves this end. As I broaden the scope of analysis to include more than one interpretation, I must ensure that the words I use do not imply a narrow view. To properly use affordances to frame my observations and suggestions, I must explain the role listeners play in their experiences.

In all my discussions of listeners, I avoid the phrase "the listener." I believe this implies that there is one listener or one best listener. It too strongly affirms the notion that all listeners act the same. Instead, I opt to say "a listener" to refer to one person or "listeners" in a general sense, word choices which create space for more freedom of individuality between listeners. Additionally, although gender could certainly be a factor in listening situations, it is not one that I examine in this document. Rather than risk unintentionally gendering an experience, I tend toward the plural "listeners."[21]

In discussions of musical experience, I also carefully choose the verb tenses that I use. When speaking about "actions" from or within a piece of music (phrases such as "the B moves to an A" or "the first violin begins to crescendo"), I use present tense, because I believe the potential for music exists in all time frames, as it relies on individual perception by a specific listener in time. When speaking about possible experiences in listeners, in a more general sense, I use conditional phrases. This is meant to

[21] This is often less cumbersome than using pronouns such as "his and hers" and less confusing than using a gender-neutral pronoun like "their" to refer to one person.

indicate that some listeners, but not all, have the potential for an experience like this. When speaking about my own experiences, I can be more specific about the timing of events, as I am referring to specific instances of listening. Therefore, I use past tense when recalling an experience I had in the past, and I use present tense, future tense, or conditional tenses to indicate experiences that I currently have or consider possible for myself at some point in the future.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the verb "to afford" is somewhat problematic in its common usage. The verb seems to point to only the subject of the sentence as an active participant. Saying that a piece affords a certain experience to a listener makes it sound like pieces are active and listeners are passive. However, an in-depth examination of the philosophical underpinnings of musical affordances, as we have already explored, clarifies that this is just a limitation of language and not a limitation of the theory. The only reason a piece can afford anything is because there exists a listener and a listening situation. Since all experiences are mediated in some way, I attempt to bridge this gap in language by identifying ways that listeners mediate their experiences. This focus helps remind us that listeners play just as important a role in the emergence of affordances as pieces do.

Furthermore, because I hold to the philosophy described above, that music exists when piece and listener come together, I intentionally use the word "music" only when referring to instances where both piece and listener play active roles. Outside this type of scenario, I generally refer to musical compositions as "pieces" or "works" in order to distinguish the Gibsonian "object" from its affordances.

### 2.4 Questioning the Concept of the "Ideal Listener"

> "Moreover, since structural representations of style in the mind of the listener constantly undergo change (formation, deformation, transformation), their inherently variable instability prevents in principle the use of top-down learning as an analytical constant from which to construct a convincing cognitive theory of melodic implication. For each listener possesses a different style knowledge, a unique set of cognitive style structures. Although all experienced listeners share style knowledge to some extent, it is not tenable to posit that any one cultural segment of that shared knowledge represents a perceptual whole. . . . In short, the notion of an 'ideal' listener with an 'ideal' structural knowledge

> of any given style is hopelessly rationalistic in terms of determining the real-time operational constants."[22]

An idea that subtly permeates our music-theoretical culture is that of a hierarchy of listeners, that some musical interpretations are better than others.[23] I call this the problem of the "ideal listener." Most people would not use this phrase (or similar phrases) outright. But a few do, and many more buy into the concept that some interpretations are better than others. Often I believe that analysts do not realize they have this bias. In fact, I used to subscribe to similar language and concepts, before I realized what I was implying about listening experiences.

I believe part of the reason for this bias against plurality is due to our reliance on generalizations. Much of music theory, especially with regard to meaning, leans on these, with admittedly effective outcomes. Empirical studies also tend to look for a statistical majority and push aside any outliers, and for good reason. The purpose of many studies and analyses is to make general conclusions, and this is a useful type of research for music theorists. However, for our field to also accept the subjective side of experience, some analysts must move away from the majority and specifically study the outliers. There is room in the world of analysis to recognize interpretations and experiences that fall outside what a theorist might assume or prescribe.

Personally, I hung on to remnants of the "ideal listener" for so long because an ideal listener is a listener that is easy to write about. Analysts can, in some respects, create whatever type of listener they want to prove their points. Am I unsure whether listeners actually hear that the motive from the beginning

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[22] Eugene Narmour, *The Analysis and Cognition of Melodic Complexity: The Implication-Realization Model* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 8.

[23] An entire argument could certainly be made that some ways of hearing or interpreting are better than others. I will leave this discussion to those well-versed in the rhetoric and art of criticism. My goal is only to start a dialog about the potential there is in acknowledging that there is more than one way (and even more than a few ways) of experiencing a piece. Some listeners may dismiss certain pieces as being "not good" because they do not like them. Just as I dislike the idea of confusing a different interpretation for a bad interpretation, I also dislike the idea of confusing personal opinion or taste for quality of composition. My ideas in this document are not meant to champion listeners who wish to place a value judgment on a musical work based on how they hear it. Rather, I am simply saying that if some listeners hear music in such a way, there may be value in recognizing that as analysts. This document does not presume to judge whether any piece is good or bad. Again, I will leave criticism to the critics.

of the piece comes back in the bass line at the end? My "ideal listener" would hear it. Am I trying to make a point that a tone row structures a piece in a certain way when it appears in retrograde? I can strengthen my argument by asserting that my "ideal listener" would hear the row and acknowledge its structural role.

To be clear, I am not opposed to generalizations in theoretical accounts, nor do I think that using potential listening experiences to solidify analytical points is wrong in and of itself. I am mainly concerned about what our language conveys in these situations. If analysts hear a piece in certain ways, they should claim those interpretations as their own. If they want to claim that most listeners act in a particular fashion, they should add that it is perfectly reasonable that some might not. If they want to encourage their readers to try to listen through particular trajectories or narratives, they should do so explicitly. If they imagine that a listener might hear specific musical features that the analysis highlights, I recommend invoking a "hypothetical listener" rather than an "ideal" one.[24] When value-laden words are replaced by those that suggest more than one acceptable reading of a piece, we perceptibly communicate open-mindedness about experience.

Of course, there are also some instances where an analyst is speaking to trained musicians and wants to point out a deep level of analysis that involves a certain type of listening. There is nothing wrong with creating a hypothetical listener to make a point or to demonstrate one way to hear a piece. There is no reason that all analysis should take varying listening perspectives into account; many analyses do not try to do this or need to do this. But we should always be honest about what our labels mean.

I fundamentally oppose the notion of an "ideal listener," and I intend to use my analyses in this document to demonstrate why. There might be an ideal listener for a specific situation, but the fact that this is qualified by the situation means that an "ideal listener" or "ideal listening" is not universal and only could apply to a specific piece in a specific environment at a specific time. When analysts reference an "ideal listener," what they really do is invent a hypothetical listener who could hear the piece being analyzed in a way that falls in line with the points the analyst is making. There is nothing wrong with this type of analysis or with inventing these potential listeners. Indeed, in Chapters 3–4 of this document, I

[24] The word "ideal" need not be explicitly stated for the attitude of hierarchy to be present in an analysis.

will also reference hypothetical listeners to demonstrate how pieces could be experienced in ways that I myself have not experienced them.

The problem comes when such a listener is assumed to be *the* "ideal listener," as if other listeners are not ideal, as if their perspectives are imperfect or flawed in some way. If one listener can hear large-scale key relations between movements of a symphony, and another cannot, is the first one a more ideal listener? What if the second listener hears a rhythmic motive that the first listener did not? Or what if there is a third listener that has never heard a symphony and does not know the difference between a cello and a string bass? Is this listener's interpretation of the piece expendable? I strongly believe that none of these perspectives are inferior. They are different and they have different insights and may support different analytical claims; but no one listener is more "ideal" than another.

To address questions of meaning, emotion, and experience as if there is one "right" or "normal" way to interpret a piece is to exclude any listeners who interpret it differently. This attitude runs the risk of prescribing how one *should* hear a certain passage, according to the author or speaker, discouraging other sorts of experiences that could heighten our appreciation for or understanding of the work.

I think we do listeners—and music, actually—a disservice when we regard, whether explicitly or implicitly, some ways of hearing and interpreting music as secondary. Several years ago, I had the privilege of teaching music fundamentals to non-musicians for the first time. Although my students lacked the vocabulary to describe what they heard, I soon realized that their listening experiences were no less intense or insightful than mine were. Yes, there were aspects of music that I could hear that many of them could not. The pieces afforded me different experiences because I mediated them through my many years of aural training and many more years of being immersed in music in the context of multiple music schools. I consider this training valuable for understanding music in certain ways, and I taught these students to hear more of these aspects over the course of the semester (such as meter, cadences, and intervals).[25] At the same time, they could hear music in ways that I could not, and in ways that frankly

[25] I am intentionally avoiding the issue of aural skills pedagogy in this discussion, although I have already briefly touched on it in Chapter 1. As I previously explained, there may be plenty of arguments against

amazed me, because they brought their own backgrounds and environments—their own listening situations—with them that will never be part of me. Considering a musically trained perspective to be unquestionably better than an untrained perspective is not just elitist, it is irresponsible. Highly trained musicians make up an extremely small percentage of people who listen to and love music. If we truly wish to describe musical experience, we should not neglect the experiences of others who are not like us.

There may be instances when analysts (or teachers) want their readers (or students) to listen in certain ways. Sometimes, particular ways of listening may be considered the best ways in a specific context or to serve a specific purpose. Even if we are in a situation like this, I believe that calling someone an "ideal listener" carries too much baggage to be useful.

The tendency to talk about an "ideal listener" in one way or another is by no means a new phenomenon. Some of these ideas no doubt are rooted in the influential philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno and his typology of listeners from 1969. The typology is not merely a categorization of different listener types; it is a hierarchy. Two of the types are deemed adequate, and the other six are inadequate, or regressive.[26] Adorno uses the words "expert" and "good" for his adequate listener types, terms that carry significant hierarchical meaning (an expert implies the existence of non-experts; good listening implies the existence of bad listening). People who listen to music for its emotive powers or who listen for entertainment purposes are not considered adequate listeners.[27]

It is possible that Adorno's influence is part of the reason that some scholars shy away from discussing emotion, as if this is somehow antithetical to musical understanding. Adorno is certainly

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my admittedly simplistic claim that all listening situations are equal. However, for the present study, I believe it is useful to hold to this claim in order to create a reaction against that scholarship that implies (or states) that listening is hierarchical. I welcome future responses to my work that seek to add balance to it by explaining how some listening situations could be objectively worse than others, but I do not feel it would add much to the current arguments I am presenting.

[26] Throughout his writings, Adorno alters the way he talks about listening, and he does not always refer to these eight different types. Even in those variants, though, he still regards some ways of listening as adequate and others as regressive. See Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 209–10.

[27] The typology is explained thoroughly in Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 3–18.

biased against emotional responses to music. He feels that cognitive responses are on a higher plane.[28] Given this mentality, it is logical for him to consider it best to listen beyond the surface of the music in order to understand its structure, musical connections, and context.[29]

Admittedly, Adorno is not trying to establish hard and fast boundaries of listening types. He is using philosophy to grapple with issues of sociology and music. He explicitly invites others to question his statements and adjust the typology as appropriate.[30] In addition, after spelling out his typology, he emphasizes that he is not casting judgment on any type of listener. He does not think that everyone should try to be an "expert" or "good" listener. He explains that his critics misunderstand him.[31] Even if he truly means to cast no judgment on any type of listener, it is no wonder that he is misunderstood. The entire section of his book talking about listeners uses positively valenced words (i.e., expert, utopian, musical) when discussing adequate listening and clearly adopts an attitude of disdain when discussing regressive listening. Adorno scorns elitism from regressive types of listeners—while being terribly elitist. Even as he claims to be non-judgmental, he uses language that implies criticism: "The fact which expresses the antagonistic state of the whole is that even musically correct modes of conduct may, by their positions in the whole, cause moments of disaster."[32] Who decides what a "musically correct mode of conduct" is? And if it can "cause moments of disaster," is it really that correct? Adorno's language continually betrays his attitude of judgment on those he considers "lesser" listeners, even though he occasionally makes statements to the contrary.[33]

Ola Stockfelt responds to Adorno's typology of listeners with a typology of listening. Instead of focusing on listeners as unchanging entities, he presumes that various modes of listening are available to

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[28] Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 85.
[29] Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, 4–6.
[30] Adorno, 1–2.
[31] Adorno, 18.
[32] Adorno, 19.
[33] When mincing words with translated authors, it is important to remember that particular English words are chosen by translators. Presumably, some term other than "expert listener," for example, could have been chosen. However, when Adorno's translated statements continually reinforce the same attitude, it is obvious what the author's view is, regardless of any particular word choice. It is the job of the translator to preserve not only the text, but also its original meaning.

them in different contexts. Stockfelt also refers to adequate listening, defining it as listening that takes context of the musical work into account (i.e., genre, social uses, etc.). He believes that there can be multiple "adequate" ways to listen depending on the circumstance,[34] and some ways that are adequate in certain contexts would be inadequate in others.[35] Listeners should approach a piece by Steve Reich differently than one by Felix Mendelssohn. An understanding of pop music takes a different form than an understanding of Medieval motets.

Significantly, Stockfelt separates adequacy from value, with emphasis:

> "*To listen adequately hence does not mean any particular, better, or 'more musical,' 'more intellectual,' or 'culturally superior' way of listening. It means that one masters and develops the ability to listen for what is relevant to the genre in the music, for what is adequate to understanding according to the specific genre's comprehensible context*."[36]

Even so, Stockfelt's language can be confusing. We are left to wonder if no value judgment lies behind words such as "competence,"[37] "adequate,"[38] "inadequate,"[39] and even "incorrect."[40] However, his insistence on proper modes of listening being dependent on the piece and the situation give his claims more of a practical context than those of Adorno.

Jenefer Robinson compares listeners in music scholarship to readers in literary studies: "Both raise the same questions about whether there is an 'ideal' listener or reader who has the *right* responses at the *right* time."[41] Her answer to this question seems to mirror Stockfelt's views. She speaks of "appropriate emotional responses," which relate to understanding issues of context, genre, culture, and

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[34] Ola Stockfelt, "Adequate Modes of Listening," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel, trans. Anahid Kassabian and Leo G. Svendsen, Knowledge: Disciplinarity and Beyond (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 132–7.
[35] Stockfelt, 138–9.
[36] Stockfelt, 137.
[37] Stockfelt, 133.
[38] Stockfelt, 137.
[39] Stockfelt, 142.
[40] Stockfelt, 142.
[41] Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 365.

history, much in the same way that Stockfelt's "adequate listening" does. More than one response or interpretation can be appropriate, but there can also be inappropriate responses if a listener is distracted or does not understand the work.[42] Again, I would ask who decides what level of understanding or focus is good enough to form appropriate interpretations. In Chapter 3, I provide an analysis that deals with distraction. I believe it lends some insight into musical experience and compositional and performative factors that can only come about from such a discussion. If I had brushed off my distracted experience as "inappropriate," these insights would have been lost.

Another philosopher who speaks about varying qualities of listening experiences is Peter Kivy. In an essay response to Jerrold Levinson, he discusses "successful" listening. This type of listening is based on how deeply a listener understands the work.[43] Kivy believes that you can only fully appreciate and enjoy music when you understand it.[44] He calls "architectonic listening" a successful way to listen, but this can only be achieved through "deep and concentrated attention" and "explicit musical knowledge of musical form, structure, syntax, style, and history," and only by "those willing and able to do the work."[45] It is somewhat unclear what Kivy thinks of listeners who cannot or do not achieve "successful" listening. He may be using the word interchangeably with "structural" or "enjoyable." If one's goal in listening is to appreciate and enjoy music, then success would be reached with a higher level of understanding, according to Kivy. Elsewhere, he writes, "Musical understanding always increases musical appreciation. . . . [I]n spite of setbacks, the general tendency is for increase in understanding to bring increase in enjoyment."[46]

As I mentioned above, some music analysts adopt the language of hierarchical listeners, usually to serve their analytical purposes. At the beginning of *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff talk about an "experienced listener." This type of listener subconsciously understands

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[42] Robinson, 365, 460 (fn. 49).
[43] Peter Kivy, *New Essays on Musical Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191–2.
[44] Kivy, 204.
[45] Kivy, 206.
[46] Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 117.

the idioms inherent in a style while listening, based on prior exposure.[47] "A listener without sufficient exposure to an idiom will not be able to organize in any rich way the sounds he perceives. However, once he becomes familiar with the idiom, the kind of organization that he attributes to a given piece will not be arbitrary but will be highly constrained in specific ways."[48] This language presents the concept of a dichotomy; listeners either understand an idiom and correctly intuit relationships between all musical aspects of a piece, or they do not understand it and can make no sense of what they are hearing. Certainly most listeners fall somewhere between these two extremes. The authors know that their "experienced listener" probably does not represent a real person, and they acknowledge that listeners likely hear music differently than each other in some ways. Nevertheless, they continue on writing for this "experienced listener," even occasionally calling on a "perfect" listener, because it serves their purpose.[49] There is nothing intrinsically wrong with writing to an ideal audience; but since their theory is based on the supposed perceptions and cognitive processes of these ideal listeners, they run the risk of alienating their readers who fall short of this standard.

In his quest for musical meaning, Robert Hatten often appeals to "stylistically competent" listeners in his analyses. Hatten's own definition of "competency" is "the internalized (possibly tacit) cognitive ability of a listener to understand and apply stylistic principles, constraints, types, correlations, and strategies of interpretation to the understanding of musical works in that style."[50] "Competent" listeners appear to be quite similar to Stockfelt's "adequate" listening and Robinson's "appropriate" responses, in that they approach pieces within their stylistic contexts. At the same time, Hatten's approach mirrors that of Lerdahl and Jackendoff in that these "ideal" listeners have internalized the musical grammar of a style, and interpretation flows from this intuition.

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[47] Contrast this mentality with the quote from Narmour that begins the present section.
[48] Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, The MIT Press Series on Cognitive Theory and Mental Representation (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1983), 3.
[49] Lerdahl and Jackendoff, 3.
[50] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 288.

Hatten also uses the concept of a "stylistically competent" listener to exemplify his theories and analyses. In his discussion of what he calls "aesthetically warranted emotions (AWEs)" and "composed expressive trajectories (CETs)," competent listeners hear what he hears and understand what he intends.[51] In fact, it is possible that Hatten has modeled his listeners after himself. On the other hand, they can sometimes take on extremely focused tasks that seem more difficult than how they are presented: "Although highly marked rhetorical gestures may well serve as major signposts for our understanding of a discourse and the form of a movement's expressive genre, as competent listeners we are engaged in fully processing the expressive richness of every detail we possibly can grasp."[52] Although Hatten's language is less extreme than some of the other scholars I have mentioned, some of the same principles are still at work in these ideas. It still begs the question that if "stylistically competent" listeners will experience AWEs and CETs in the way he expresses, how will "stylistically incompetent" listeners experience them? Hatten clearly intends for his audience to be people with similar competencies to himself. But what if someone else read this article? Would they be encouraged to try to listen in the way presented in the article? Or would their lack of competency hinder their understanding of the analysis? If authors want to encourage their audience to hear in certain ways, they should express this. If they are recounting their own experiences, they should own them.

Finally, how do listeners know if they have reached competency? Herein lies one of the most problematic aspects of a hierarchy of listeners: that of authority. If we are going to make value judgments, who gets to decide what is ideal? Who is qualified to make such judgments? Do these "qualified" people always hear in the best way themselves? It is difficult to pin down where the validity of a listening experience resides, if it is not taken as inherent to the experience. What does it mean to say that a way of hearing or a way of interpretation is incorrect? If we tie interpretation too closely to "the composer's intent" or even the cultural context of the composition, we may miss out on enriching insights from experiences that fall outside these boundaries. Even if we do not agree with the interpretation, it could

[51] Robert S. Hatten, "Aesthetically Warranted Emotion and Composed Expressive Trajectories in Music," *Music Analysis* 29, no. 1–3 (2010).
[52] Hatten, 92.

prove to be a caveat for some new understanding about the limits of our own interpretation of the piece, or perhaps some new understanding about the nature of listening.

In some of these cases I have presented, the only problem might be an issue of language, not of mentality. Nevertheless, it is incredibly important to consider what our language conveys. If one listener is ideal, then others are not ideal. If there is a good or right way to hear something, then there is a bad or wrong way to hear it. If our language reflects these ideas, we should reexamine our thinking. Do we really believe what we are saying? Does our language betray a bias we did not know we had? Or do we just need to amend our language to fit our ideologies?

### 2.5 Upholding an Academic Standard

Analyses structured around subjective experiences run the risk of becoming non-academic. After all, we do not need musical educations to talk about our musical experiences. Anyone can talk about music, with varying degrees of precision and success. If scholarship morphs into personal accounts and opinions, who gets to decide if it is good enough? Indeed, throughout this chapter, I have been asserting that, to a large degree, personal accounts and opinions cannot be judged by others. However, I do believe that whether an analysis has scholarly merit can be judged. There is a difference between saying that the way someone hears a piece is wrong and saying that this account does not add significantly to scholarship. Of course, the premise of the present research is that subjective "outlier" accounts can and do add to scholarship. But they must be situated in such a way as to give them scholarly credibility. It is imperative that we are honest with ourselves and others about the purpose of our analyses, how and why we frame them as we do, and the point of view from which we approach them.[53]

[53] Whether or not we are aware of it, there is bias inherent in all music perception and thought. It is crucial that we acknowledge our own biases whenever we write—even more so when writing about experience. See Eric F. Clarke, "What's Going On: Music, Psychology, and Ecological Theory," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 336–7. See also Marion Guck's treatment of analysis in several of her articles, especially Guck, "Analytical Fictions," and Guck, "Rigors of Subjectivity."

All music analysis is subjective to a point. William Cheng writes, "The myth is that good scholarship can stand on its own merits, good ideas speak for themselves, and a good paper practically writes itself. But surely scholarship *about* art or about anything else is no more autonomous than art itself. Pretending otherwise risks leaving human interest out of the equation."[54] Since all scholarship about music is connected to the people who produce it, certain standards of professionalism are put in place to keep it of the highest possible quality. Analyses are expected to make a point, situate themselves within the rest of scholarship, address potential criticisms, flesh out and back up their arguments, and provide evidence for their claims.[55] Analyses of subjective experiences should be subjected to the same level of critique; but they should not be dismissed outright simply because they address experience.

In the analyses following this chapter, I hold myself to this standard. My analyses have a purpose: they provide examples for how to include subjective perspectives in analysis and they broaden our understanding of the rich diversity of musical experience. I have used these first two chapters to situate my ideas within the current state of academic scholarship. This dialog has also served to address some potential objections to the work I do. In my analyses, I give explanations and reasons for the listening experiences I propose, based both on musical factors and on qualities of listeners and their situations.

Even with a standard in place, dealing with subjective experiences is a messy endeavor. This is even just as true in empirical work as it is in an analytical or philosophical undertaking.

> "To make scientifically sure of the subjective content of a musical experience, beyond superficial indices, is an all but prohibitively difficult task. Experiments may tell us about degrees of the intensity of the reaction; they will hardly reach its quality. The literal, perhaps physiological and thus measureable, effects which a specific music exerts—even accelerated pulse rates have been noted—are far from identical with the esthetic experience of a work of art as such. Musical introspection is a most uncertain thing."[56]

[54] William Cheng, *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 27.
[55] Some of these principles I list are loosely based on Marion Guck's evaluation of Milton Babbitt's advancements in analytical methodology. She specifies two goals of analysis (to enhance hearing and to unearth identifying characteristics of individual works) and two methods (precision of language and backing up claims). Guck, "Rigors of Subjectivity," 54–5.
[56] Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 4.

It makes sense that talking about individual musical interactions is complex, because the interactions themselves are complex. Although this uncertainty used to bother me, it rarely does anymore. The discomfort involved in exploring uncommon ways to experience works is worth it if this exploration results in a more intimate relationship with music. As long as we hold ourselves to high academic standards, we should give ourselves permission to be a little messy when dealing with subjective issues in analysis.

## Chapter 3: Mediating Experience through Attention

### 3.0 Introduction to Issues of Attention in Musical Experience

When addressing the experiences of individual listeners, the number of possible contributing factors is as endless as the possible emotional and experiential outcomes. Deciding which viewpoints to represent is one of the challenges of analyzing music in this way. For this project, I am examining two broad methods of mediation that can afford listeners different experiences: attention and expectation. I chose these factors based on numerous personal experiences in which I noticed them mediating the way I perceived the music I was listening to. They work well in examples of integrating subjective perspectives into analysis, because they are dependent on a specific listener and help create affordances specifically for that listener. The focus of the present chapter is to explore the contribution of attention in subjective experiences.

How we direct our attention affects how we perceive musical sounds. Because of this, including information about listeners' attention in a given listening situation can be useful in analyzing their experiences. Sometimes, attention is focused unintentionally on the part of a listener. Aspects of the piece—including dynamics, contour, timbre, and certain musical gestures—can cause a listener to pay attention to those elements without realizing it. Similarly, aspects of listeners—including level of musical understanding, prior experiences, and interest—can cause them to pay attention to certain parts of a piece without doing so deliberately. At other times, attention is focused intentionally, as when a music student listens for the bass line in order to transcribe it for an assignment.

If listeners can control where they focus their attention, it follows that they should be able to change where that attention rests when they so desire. In many cases and for many listeners, this is likely true. However, there may be times that external forces are strong enough (or internal forces weak enough) that a listener is unable to change his or her focus on purpose. In other words, strength and type of attention can depend on the listening situation. A listener with no musical training may not understand how music is structured enough to even know what a bass line is or that a cello is playing it, let alone be

able to intentionally focus attention there. Similarly, if the bass line is too soft or the timbre blends with other lines, even a professional musician may not be able to attend only to this line, especially without following along with a score. Acknowledging even these details can give insight into how different listeners perceive music, as well as bring up issues of compositional and performance decisions.

Furthermore, it is interesting to examine not only where attention falls but also the nature of that attention. Some types of attention are casual, as when "background music" is playing while one does other tasks. Some types of attention are much more intense, as when a music theorist listens with the express purpose of writing about certain structural aspects. In some circumstances, attention may be more or less stationary. If I am listening to a tonal piece with the intention of analyzing its tonal centers, and my attention is drawn to a sudden key change, I will probably focus on that moment in time and how it relates to the rest of the piece. On the other end of the spectrum, attention can just as easily flow from one moment to another. If I am listening to the melodic line in a piece, my attention will likely continue to follow the movement of that line, even if it changes registers, switches to another instrument, or is altered in key, meter, dynamics, or articulation. Any type of attention can also be interrupted or shift to a different type. All of these factors are potentially useful to include in an analysis, depending on the point it addresses or the type of experience it exemplifies.

In my analysis of attention's affordances, I assume a force of inertia in musical experience similar to Steve Larson's application of it. Larson defines musical inertia as "the tendency of a pattern of motion to continue in the same fashion, where the meaning of 'same' depends on how that pattern is represented in musical memory."[1] I prefer redefining this in a way that emphasizes listeners' active role in the process: musical inertia is the tendency within listeners to continue paying attention to music in the same fashion. Larson's specification of what he means by "same" is especially significant here. He is not just describing a tendency of music. He is explaining how listeners are an essential component of the process.

[1] Steve Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 96.

As with physical inertia, when certain aspects of pieces and of listeners combine to attract their attention more strongly in other directions, listeners may focus their attention elsewhere.

Several other scholars address attention as it relates to listening experiences. In his study of almost one thousand listeners, Alf Gabrielsson collected qualitative data regarding details about specific occasions of strong musical experiences. His book presents and summarizes his findings.[2] Many of the listeners' direct accounts include descriptions of where their attention was focused and whether it shifted during the experience, even if not directly labeled "attention."[3] It is interesting to note that in these descriptions, type or strength of attention does not necessarily impose strong experiences, but it does play a role in them, in conjunction with other aspects of a listening situation.

From a sociological and philosophical perspective, in contrast with Gabrielsson's empirical one, DeNora explains that how listeners engage with music is a crucial factor in how they experience it. DeNora believes that the piece plays a role in listeners' attention; some musical elements will attract more attention than others. However, this is also connected to other aspects of a listening situation, such as the environment, past listening experiences, and personal factors specific to a particular listener.[4] Affordances are a useful way to encapsulate the interconnected relationships between various factors that contribute to a particular listener's attention, but attention itself can also contribute to further affordances. The latter is my focus in this chapter.

### 3.1 Understanding Attention through the Lens of Affordances

Whether attention is intentional or not, whether it is directed due to musical or non-musical reasons, whether it is stationary, continuous, or interrupted, reflecting on where one's attention has been

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[2] Alf Gabrielsson, *Strong Experiences with Music: Music Is Much More than Just Music*, trans. Rod Bradbury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[3] For example, one woman describes herself thus: "Before the experience, everything was like it usually is, kitchen chores and my thoughts far away, a bit absent-minded and uncommitted." When she heard a particular melody on the radio, she immediately directed her attention toward it: "All that mattered was to *hear* it. . . . I crept closer to the radio, took a pen and paper on the way and just *enjoyed* it. It was as if everything stopped, I heard only music." Gabrielsson, 69.

[4] Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49.

while listening seems plausible. In fact, reflection on one's own experience with music has already been acknowledged as a common way to approach analysis. Pieter van den Toorn asserts that as "an extension of the reflective process, analysis, too, follows experience."[5] Analysis of attention in subjective listening experiences is no different. We can begin an exploration of potential listening experiences due to changes in attention by thinking about our own attention while listening.

The ability to reflect on one's own attention specifically will likely vary depending on the listener. But for those of us who have devoted much of our time to listening to music, thinking about music, and putting our thoughts and observations about music into words, it is a reasonable skill to add to the list. Once we have begun reflecting in these ways, it is not too much of a stretch to think hypothetically about potential affordances and types of mediation that we ourselves have not necessarily experienced, but that other listeners might.

Reflection and hypothesis form the basis for the analyses in this chapter. In some cases, I relate my own reactions to listening situations and show how they were afforded by my attention. In others, I discuss potential experiences that could be afforded other listeners due to how they may focus their attention. Through these examples, I demonstrate several ways that we can talk about how different types of attention—or different ways of focusing that attention—can afford certain palpable experiences.

Listeners focus their attention in various ways based on a multitude of factors. Some of these factors are personal, originating in listeners rather than in the piece, and influence the way they mediate their experiences. A listener's emotional, mental, or physical state can affect attention. A listener who just went through a breakup will direct attention differently than one who is celebrating a milestone anniversary with a committed partner. A listener who is preoccupied with other mentally engaging tasks while listening will pay attention differently than one who is doing nothing but listening alone in a quiet space. A listener who is exhausted from a day of physical labor will focus attention differently than one who has excess energy from drinking too much coffee.

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[5] Pieter C. van den Toorn, *Music, Politics, and the Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 55.

Alternatively, other factors that may affect attention are within the piece in question, although I find it problematic to make such a statement without some qualification. The very language I am trying to avoid is that which says that a piece affects aspects of listening without acknowledging the imperative role of a listener's individuality. An assertion that musical elements can affect attention must also assume that listeners in these scenarios are able to be affected by these elements for one reason or another. That is, a piece can only affect listeners' attention when it meets some quality of theirs that allows for this effect. If we say that how *music* moves and resolves can attract and guide listeners' attention, then we are saying that *music as a collaboration of piece and listener* can affect attention. However, musical features in a piece are just as essential in this situation as listeners are, which makes it fundamentally different than what I have just explained as personal factors.[6]

For each of the following analytical examples, I reference at least two different ways that a listener could experience the work. Various versions of analysis show how differences in attention can afford different emotions and interpretations, even when the piece itself remains the same. The first two sections (3.2 and 3.3) reference mainly personal differences between listeners. The next two (3.4 and 3.5) discuss specific musical elements that listeners may connect with differently. The final two (3.6 and 3.7) suggest how external factors of the environment can affect listeners' attention.

### 3.2 Past Musical Experiences

When listeners approach a listening situation, they bring their musical past with them. Their unique history with music shapes the way they listen, and therefore the sensations that a piece can afford them. Listeners have varying degrees of background in music performance, education, and listening. They are more familiar with some genres, composers, and artists than with others. They have memories

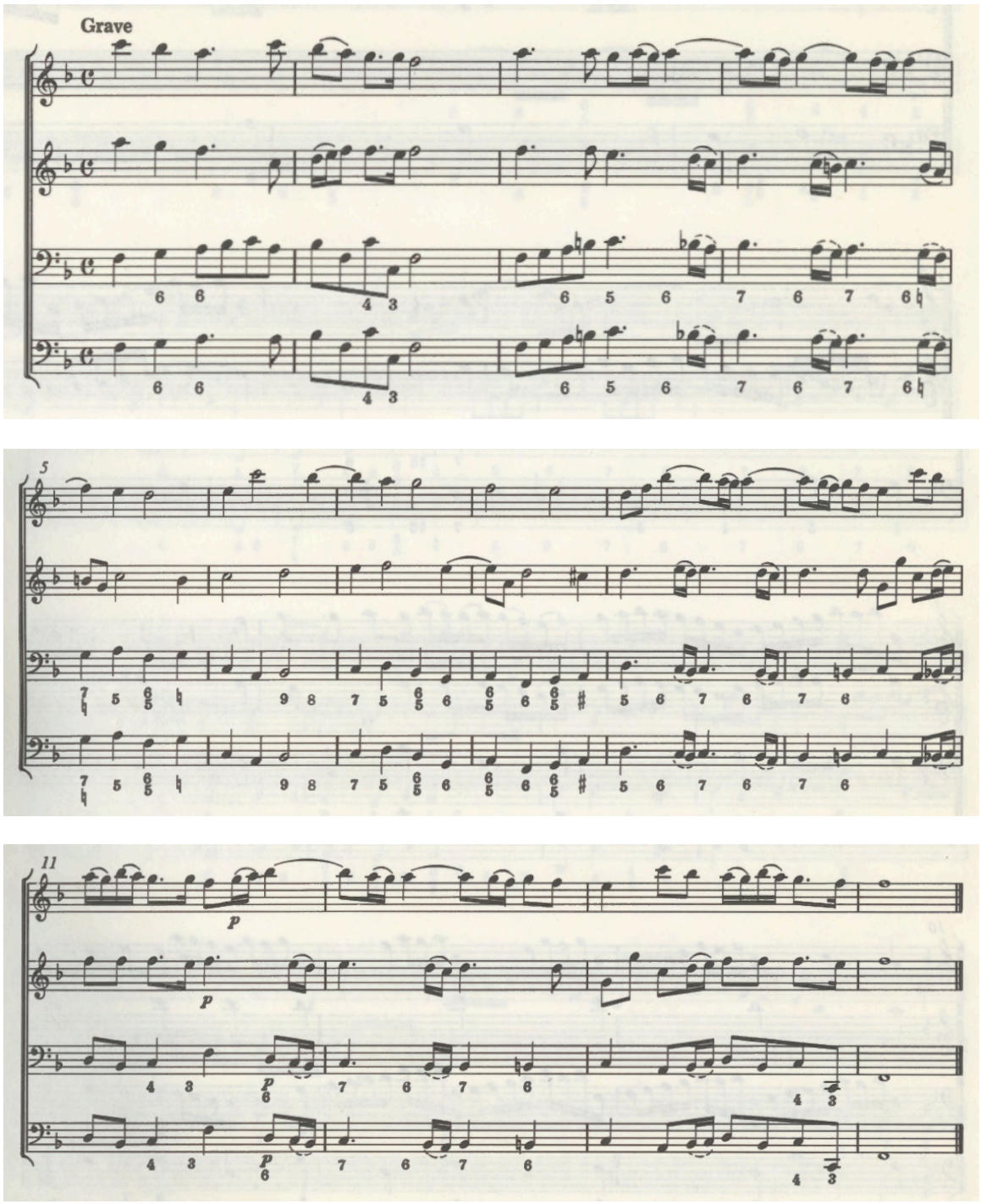
[6] I do emphasize aspects of listeners in this document, but it is imperative to remember that musical affordances are always dependent both on listeners and on pieces. Just as a piece cannot prompt an experience without a listener to experience it, so a listener cannot have a musical experience unless it is prompted by a piece.

(conscious and unconscious) of musical experiences that influence all their current and future experiences.

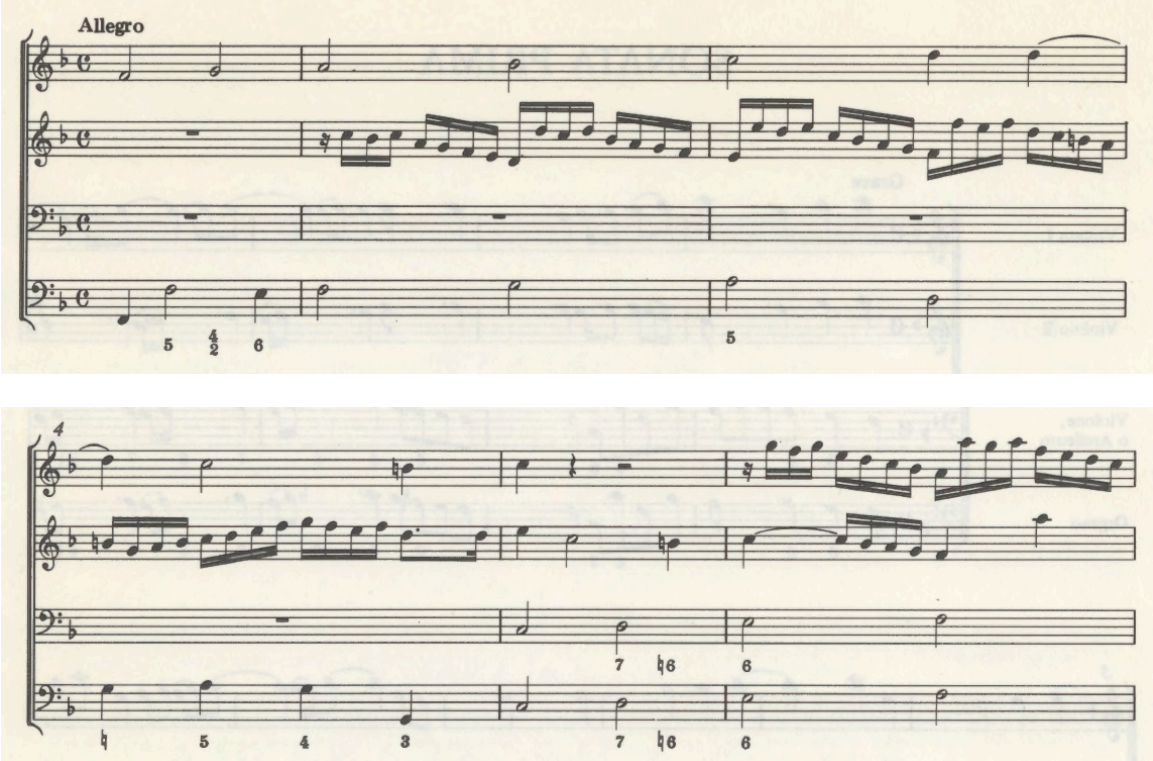
The previous musical encounters that listeners bring to a musical situation cause their attention to mediate experiences in particular ways. Music students are taught to listen in certain ways in aural skills courses. They are probably more likely to pay attention to scale degrees, arpeggiations of chords, and harmonic function than a college student who has never taken a music course. Instrumentalists (whether professional or amateur) may tend to direct their attention toward the timbre and range of the instrument they are most familiar with. Vocalists may do the same with their vocal range. A listener who has never heard Corelli's music before would pay attention to a work by him in different ways that I would, after listening to his music for the purpose of analysis for a number of years.

One passage that listeners could experience in various ways is the beginning of the second movement of Corelli's Trio Sonata op. 1/1. In four contrasting scenarios with the same recording,[7] the piece affords listeners different emotions when the second movement begins. These scenarios are based on how listeners' musical backgrounds might affect how their attention mediates the first movement. Example 3.1 provides the score for the first movement and the first six measures of the second.

[7] Arcangelo Corelli, *Corelli Complete Edition*, Musica Amphion, conducted by Pieter-Jan Belder, recorded May 31, 2001, Brilliant Classics B0044ZQ8QC, CD. Unless otherwise specified, all my personal accounts in this document took place while I was listening to this recording.




**Example 3.1.** Op. 1/1, I. Grave (all), II. Allegro (mm. 1–6).




**Example 3.1**, continued.

In a first scenario, let us assume that listeners are amateur musicians who mainly sing melodies for fun. Such listeners could potentially focus their attention on the first violin because of its register, considering the top voice to be the primary line. It is likely that they would continue to track the top voice into the second movement, where, in this recording, it maintains its relative rate of speed (where a quarter note equals a half note) but switches its direction. The line's sudden ascent, mediated by listeners' inertia to listen closely to the top line, could afford an environment where these listeners hear the beginning of the second movement as an expression of hope.

Listeners who are not used to singing or playing melodies could also listen to the top voice in a second scenario. Perhaps they carefully attend to the melodic trajectory rather than the register, following the series of gradually falling lines. When the second movement begins, instead of experiencing the steady upward melody as a signifier of hope, they would continue to focus on the falling lines, which are featured in the second violin. Although the contour is similar, the overall effect of the second violin line

in the second movement is quite different than the first violin in the first movement. It moves quickly and does not start right at the beginning of the movement. It also adds an off-beat aspect to the rhythm because the high note of each descending line lands on the second sixteenth-note of the set. These musical elements, mediated through listeners' attention to this particular line, would afford a sense of urgency in the second movement, providing a contrast to the listeners in the first scenario.

For a third scenario, imagine that listeners are accomplished cellists who have performed this particular trio sonata. They would likely focus on the bass line in the first movement, mediating their listening experiences through their performance experiences. At the beginning of the second movement, the first violin line contains the same notes of the initial bass line: F, G, A, Bb, C (and, in this recording, at the same speed). The piece could afford listeners this realization in this scenario because they already have an intimate knowledge of the bass line in the first movement, and they are familiar enough with the piece that they could still hear the bass line in the second movement without having to attend to it too intently. Consequently, they may begin listening more closely to the first violin in the second movement when they realize it mimics the initial bass line. Attention to the rising line suggests an experience of hope, as in the first scenario; but in this case, the trio sonata could afford listeners a more complex experience. The bass line in m. 2 of the second movement also begins to mimic the same rising line: F, G, A. Even though listeners' attention would shift up to the top line due to the similarity in pitch, it would likely quickly shift back to the bass line when those pitches return. One possibility for experience is that their attention could continue to jump between the lines. This quick alternation of attention would allow listeners to hear the interplay between the lines as more important than just a single line. Rising tenths between the first violin and cello escalate the emotion from hope to triumph, while the imitative alternation tends towards a playful aspect of the affect. Hearing both these lines somewhat equally and simultaneously could afford for these listeners a lighthearted emotion in the second movement, in contrast to the heavier affects of hope and urgency in previous scenarios.

Finally, in a fourth scenario, listeners who are music theorists, who more or less understand Corelli's progressions, might attend to the bass line as the basis for harmony. When the second movement

begins, they would continue listening to the bass line as a contributor to harmonic structure, rather than as an independent line. As this particular focus of attention mediates their experience, although they would hear the bass line as most prominent, they may also hear other voices in a more holistic sound. The tempo of the second movement relative to the first in this recording causes the harmonic rhythm to occur at the same rate, and listeners could internalize this steadiness that the harmonic rhythm affords. Even though the beginning of the second movement affords listeners an emotional change in the other scenarios, during this listening experience, listeners would interpret the second movement as having an impact very similar to that of the first movement. This effect carrying through both movements is one of constancy, motion, and forward progress toward a goal.

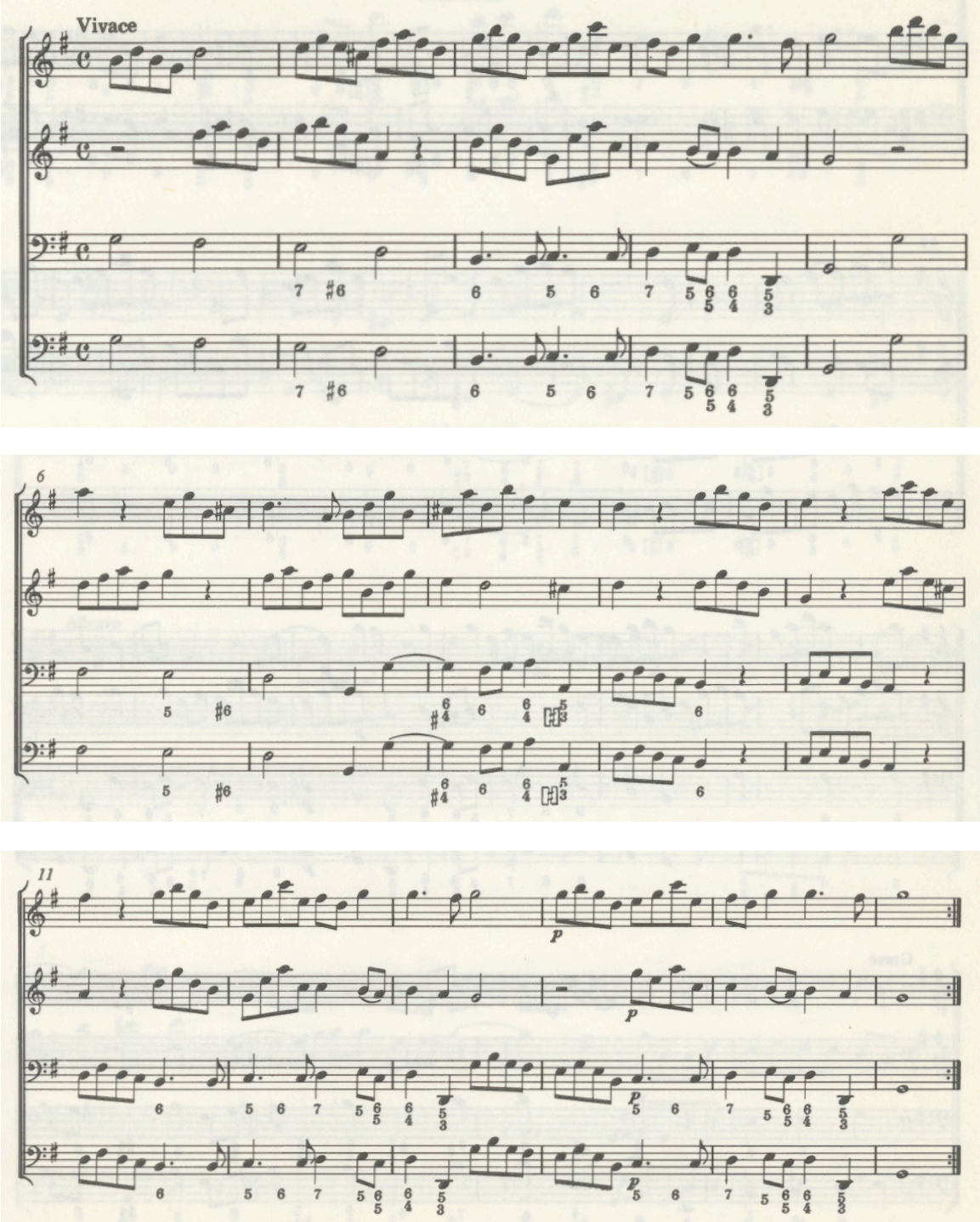
### 3.3 Personal Interest

Sometimes a listener will pay attention to various aspects of music based on a personal preference. Someone attending to the melody, say, does not necessarily have to be a soprano or a violinist. The listener could just enjoy listening to melodies. Interest can change over time, as well. Listeners who do not like a particular piece may change their minds for any number of reasons. Maybe they grew to appreciate it after listening to it multiple times. Maybe they learned interesting facts about the context of the work. Maybe a person they cared about performed the work, giving it a new special meaning to them.

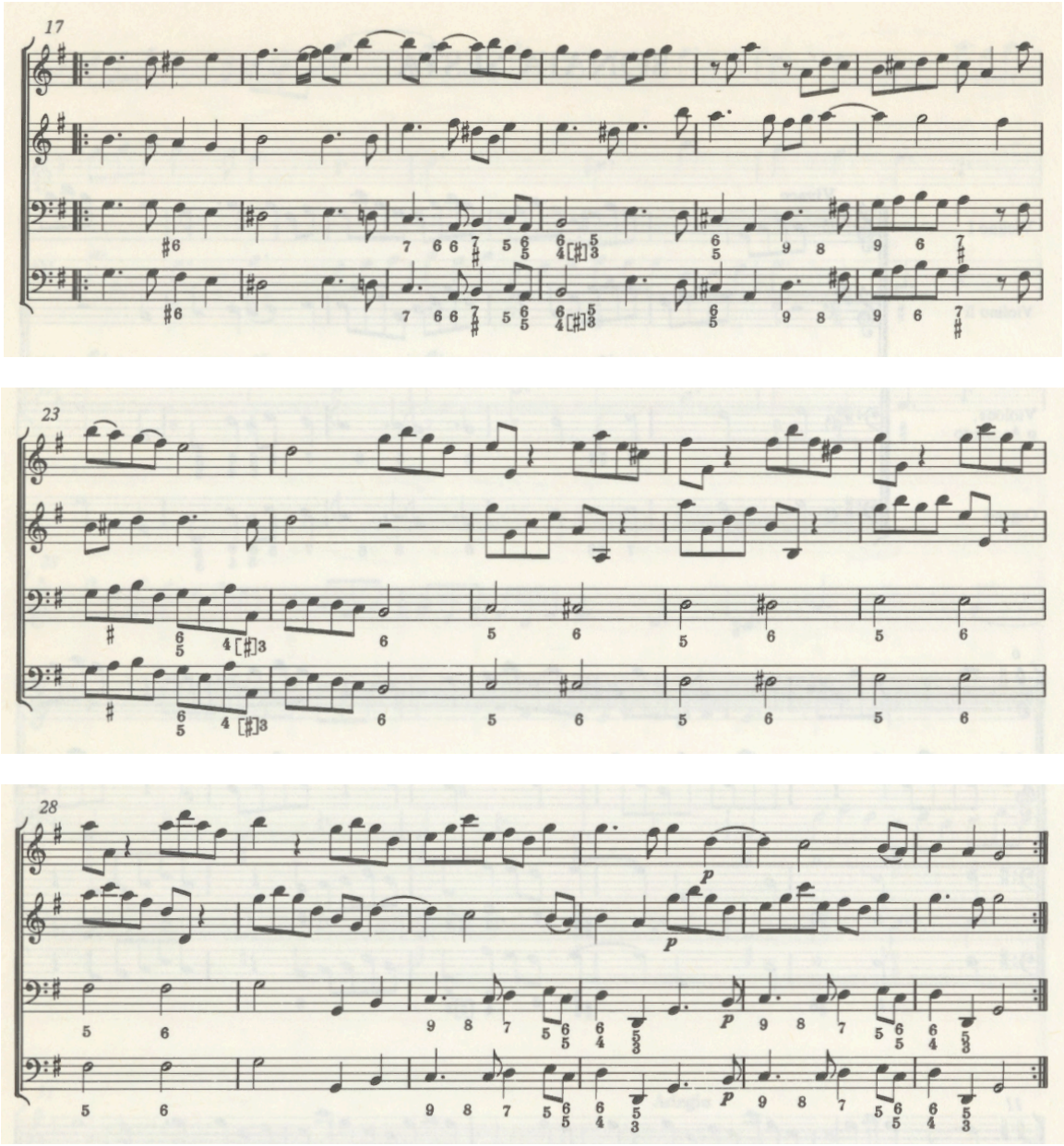
Personal interests exist for many reasons which are not particularly pertinent to the present discussion, but it is intriguing that our assumptions of what people generally like do not ring true for all. Although I usually assume that people enjoy tonal music the most, one of my professors greatly prefers listening to post-tonal music. I have seen people actually wince when hearing the shrill timbre of a piccolo, but it is the favorite instrument of one of my former co-workers. Personally, I enjoy deceptive motion and Neapolitan chords; I love Baroque music; I prefer unaccompanied choral pieces to accompanied ones. When I hear music that piques my interest for whatever reason, I tend to pay more attention to it.

We can use analysis to show how personal interests mediate various types of experiences. The first time I listened to the first movement of the Trio Sonata op. 3/6 (Example 3.2), I found a secondary melody played by the organist[8] more interesting than the interlaced violin lines. I can identify several reasons for this based on what I know about my own preferences. The top lines have a steady rhythm without much rhythmic variety. One or both violins play eighth notes for nearly the entire movement, except at cadences. I found this to be somewhat monotonous. In contrast, there is some syncopation in the secondary melody that I picked out of the texture. Along with this syncopation are the dissonances it helps create, such as the third-inversion chord on the downbeat of m. 8, which acts as a bass suspension. I have a personal affinity for accented dissonances. I also particularly enjoy countermelodies that work against a primary melody to create counterpoint or harmonic progression. Even before I learned to read music, I would harmonize while singing along with the songs on my cassette tapes at home or the hymns at church. I often sang alto parts in choir, and I have always enjoyed the musical challenge of singing something other than the main melody. Certainly not everyone feels this way; it is something personal about me. But because I mediate my listening experiences through these idiosyncrasies, I often find myself attending to a countermelody or secondary part.

[8] I was listening to the Belder recording in this instance. Since the organ is realizing the figures, the specific line that I attended to is not written out in the score. It was something introduced by the performer in an appropriate style. It fit the rest of the texture so well that had it not been for the difference in timbre, I may not have realized that Corelli did not indicate it to be played exactly this way.




**Example 3.2.** Op. 3/6, I. Vivace.




**Example 3.2**, continued.

In this particular case, my personal interest in secondary melodies coupled with increased variety in rhythm and dissonance to afford a playful experience. My attention on the organ, specifically for these reasons, mediated my experience to help the movement feel carefree to me.

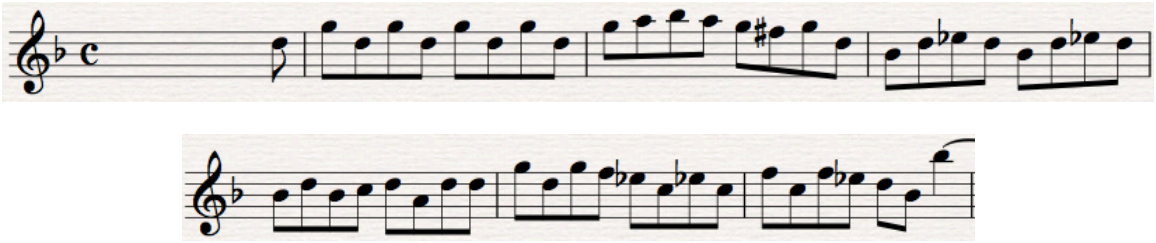
Another listener who does not like countermelodies as much as I do would probably have a different experience. Imagine a listener who loves the sound of modulation. This listener might attend to

the bass line in order to identify cadences on different pitches, Sol-Do motion at different tonal levels, and altered scale degrees to pivot to new keys. This movement has a number of modulations, and the bass line employs similar patterns at different tonal levels to emphasize this. This listener's interest could afford him or her feelings of contentment at each cadence that solidifies a different key.

### 3.4 Multiple Melodies

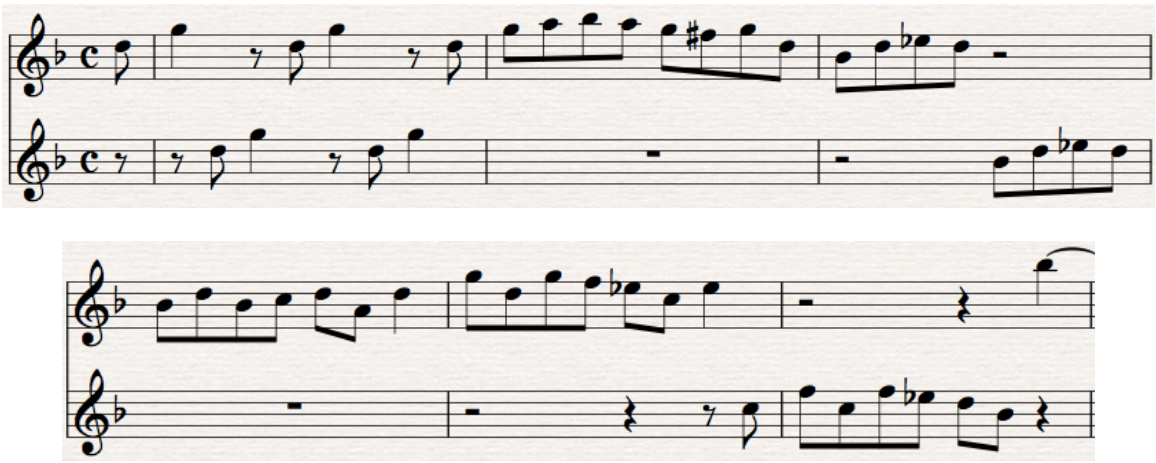
In many of Corelli's trio sonatas, the two violins are hard to aurally distinguish (without looking at the score). They use the same range, have the same timbre, imitate each other, and pass the melody back and forth. This ambiguity about which violin is which affords listeners a variety of possible ways to hear these pieces, either intentionally or non-intentionally. The way listeners focus their attention when listening to this type of movement can afford them drastically different experiences.

The second movement of the op. 4/2 trio sonata is one such example. When listening to this movement, I have been able to intentionally adjust my attention on the violins to hear their interactions in different ways. In one scenario, I heard the highest sounding notes at any given time as belonging to one line, as demonstrated in Example 3.3. This way of hearing afforded me the sense of a melody-and-accompaniment texture. While it is difficult to say whether this directly affected my emotions, it certainly did affect my experience of the music. Hearing a melody-and-accompaniment texture afforded me an understanding of one instrument (a violin) having more importance than the others, in some way. It afforded me the ability to sing along with the "melody" if I wanted. The affordance that stood out to me the most, though, was the idea that the entire movement revolved around this "melody." Often, a second violin did not even seem present. At cadences, what I heard as a "lower line" was more salient, but only as harmonic and contrapuntal support.



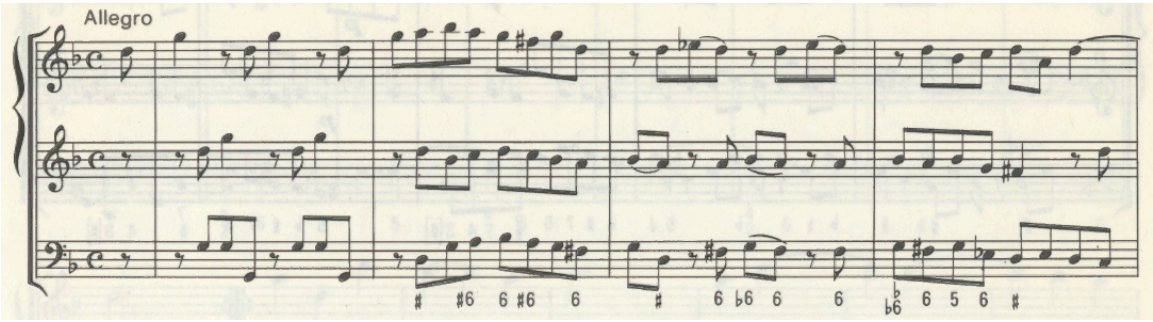
**Example 3.3.** The "top line" as I heard it in op. 4/2, II. Allegro (mm. 1–6).

In a second scenario, I heard the repeated motives as being repeated in a second violin in such a way that the "melody" from my first scenario was split between two instruments, as shown in Example 3.4. This way of hearing afforded me a sense of unity as I imagined the violins alternating motives. It also afforded me a greater affinity for this movement than the first scenario; I actually liked the movement much more when hearing it this way. I think this is due to the fact that the entire ensemble seemed of equal importance, and each line of the texture—even those not belonging to the violins—seemed more salient. Hearing this movement as more polyphonic afforded me the idea that this movement was harmonically rich and overall balanced, whereas the first way of hearing did not.

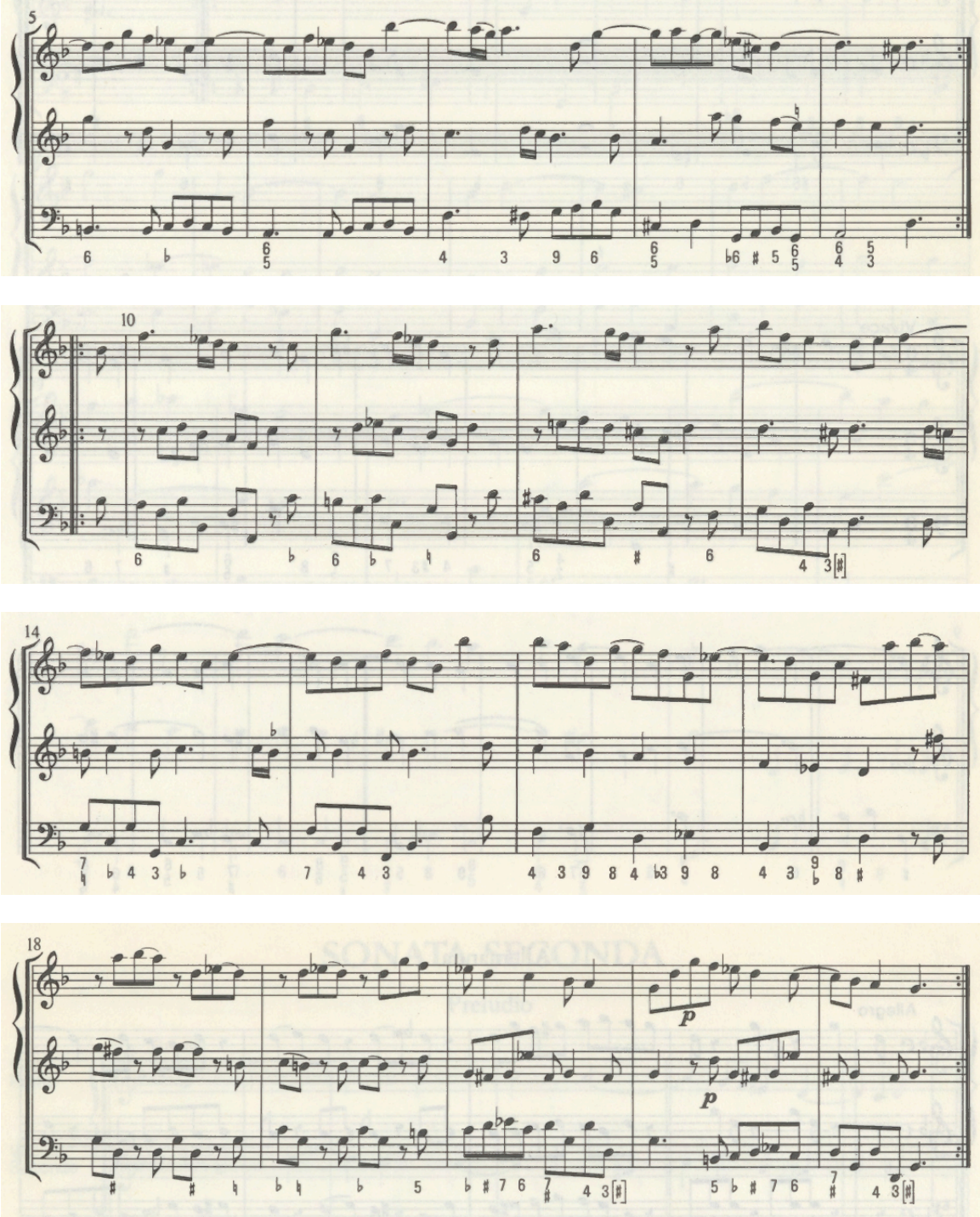


**Example 3.4.** The "split melody" as I heard it in op. 4/2, II. Allegro (mm. 1–6).

I did not look at the score for this movement right away. In fact, I had learned the movement well aurally and heard it over and over again in various ways, over the course of several months, before opening a score to see how the parts were divided among the ensemble. I was convinced that the second scenario was what I would find in the score; but to my surprise, it matches neither of the scenarios that I describe here. I listened to the movement again, this time mediating my experience by following along with the score, given in Example 3.5. This third scenario afforded me a feeling of complexity in a way that the first two had not. The relationship between the violins is constantly changing. In one moment, they imitate each other; in the next, they play together to create vertical harmony. Sometimes they are homophonic, but the lines can quickly change to play independent, yet complementary, rhythms. I tend to pay attention to the downbeats in this movement. Because of this, the way I understood prominence and importance of both lines was mainly afforded by when they landed on downbeats. In mm. 1–2, the first violin sounded like the main line to me; for most of the remainder of the phrase, the second violin sounded like the melody, even though it did not often play the highest notes. The interaction between the two violins is more intertwined than I realized at first. It was this realization that afforded me a feeling of complexity, and a certain delight in the intricacy of this interaction. Without mediation through a score, the piece could not have afforded me delight in the same way.




**Example 3.5.** Op. 4/2, II. Allegro.



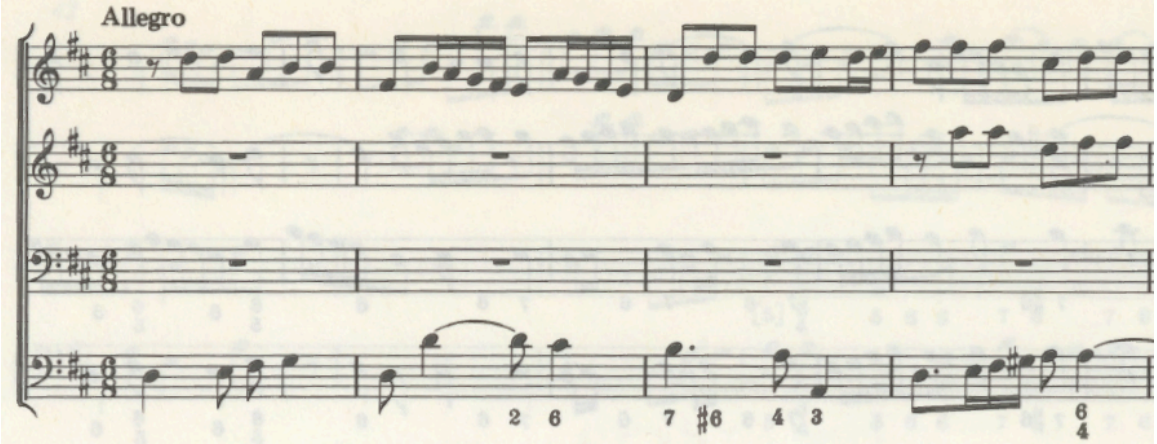
**Example 3.5**, continued.

I would not have felt the way I did in the third scenario without following the score. This suggests that if I could not read music, did not have access to the score, or chose not to look at it, I may never have

had this experience. But it also suggests that my particular *type* of attention on the score played a crucial role in the experience. Not all mediation through a score is the same type of mediation. What if I could read music, and the score was in front of me, but I followed along with the bass line? What if I were focused on how the continuo player would be thinking about the performance? What if I marked measures as they passed, but did not examine the way the violin lines were split? I focused my attention on these lines on purpose, because I was specifically interested in how the violins interacted. My type of attention on the score, therefore, was part of what afforded me my particular experience in this scenario.

### 3.5 Metric and Rhythmic Patterns

When I first heard the fourth movement of Op. 1/12, I was caught off-guard by the meter. I had just listened to the first three movements of the trio sonata, which are all in simple quadruple meter. When the fourth movement started, I began to hear it in simple meter, as well, due to inertia. For a few beats, it actually worked for my ear. Because I had paid attention to the meters of the other movements, I began to pay attention to aspects of the fourth movement that corresponded to the same metrical pattern. The rhythm of the bass line and the patterns in the first violin, mediated through my assumption about the meter and my previous entrainment in simple meter, afforded me an experience of simple meter at the beginning of this movement. However, as the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic patterns began to emerge and take more shape as the movement continued, I began to hear it in compound duple meter, its written meter. See the first few measures of this movement in Example 3.6.




**Example 3.6.** Op. 1/12, IV. Allegro (mm. 1–4).

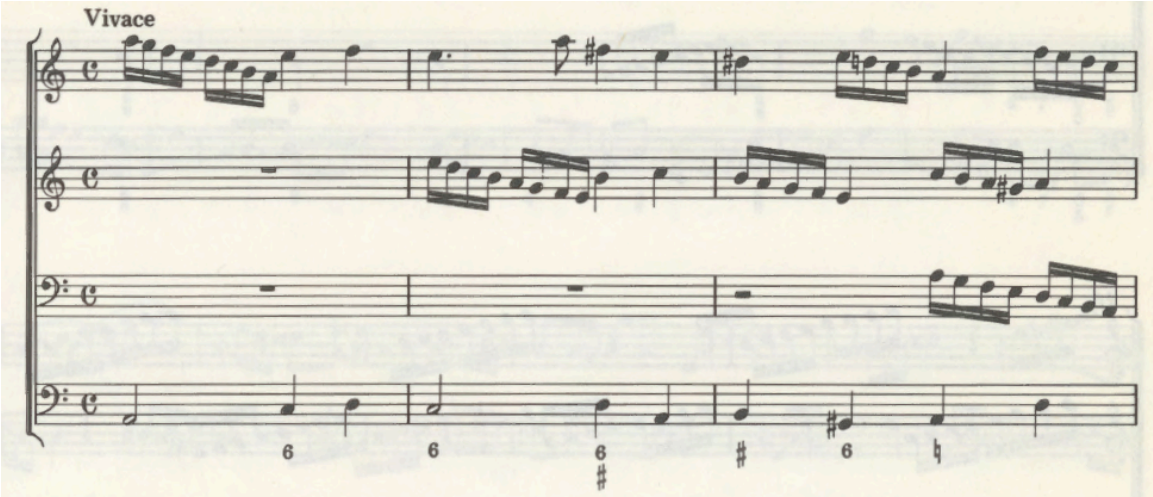
In this situation, I mediated my experience through my assumptions and my attention guided by my past listening (of the first three movements). This afforded me an unsettled feeling and an eventual jolt in my experience of the fourth movement. I felt slightly unsettled as my mind tried to make sense of the meter, and when the compound meter came out obviously enough on the surface of the music, I felt a jolt as my ear attempted to make the switch and entrain to it.

After listening to the movement several times and becoming more familiar with the emphasis of the beats in relation to the melodic patterns, I now generally direct my attention to the compound meter right at the beginning. I entrain to the meter right away and no longer feel unsettled or experience a jolt. Instead, my former encounter affords me a chance to hear the movement as mostly continuous[9] and gentle. Because of my initial "jolting" experience, I anticipate this movement's meter before it begins. I prepare myself for it so as to not experience the negative feelings of mishearing the meter again.

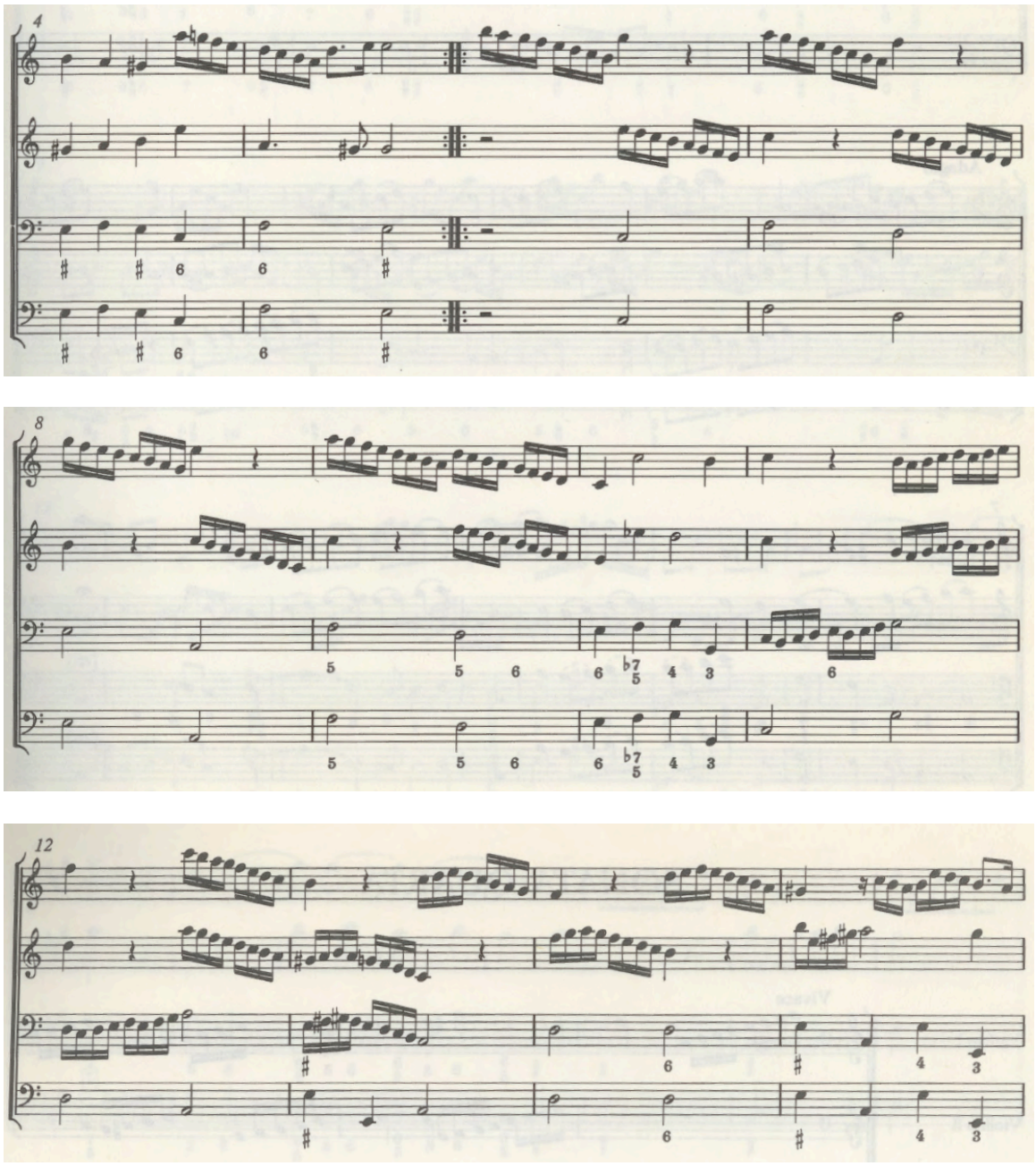
[9] The exception to this is the jolt I usually feel in mm. 18–20, where the grouping of notes in terms of rhythm, register, and harmony afford my ear a sense of metrical displacement, where four beats in a row sound like they land on the second and fifth eighth notes of the measure. Even when I try to hear the meter the way it is written, I have a difficult time doing so. I still experience a metrical hiccup at the beginning of mm. 18 and 20. This moment does not strike me as directly related to the phenomenon at the beginning of the movement that I am explaining here, but there could arise some interesting connections upon further reflection.

In some ways, the focus of my attention is subconscious when I hear this movement; I know what to expect and I remember what the meter is. However, there is a part of my attention now that is intentional. If I want to avoid the unpleasant jolt, I can intentionally prepare myself to think in compound meter. If I want to experience the disconnect between the different meters, I can still intentionally listen for simple meter at the beginning and try to hang on to it for as long as possible.

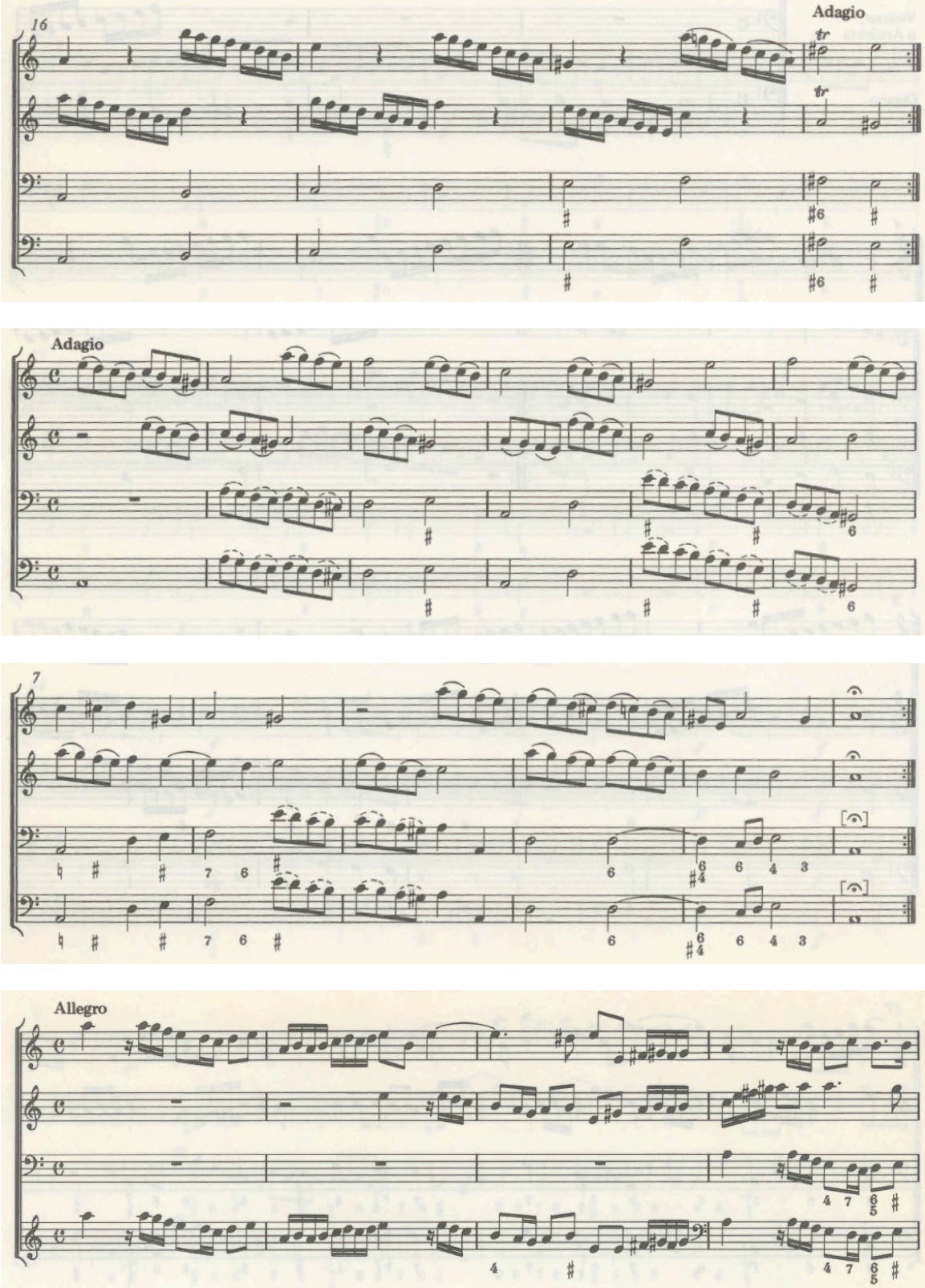
In another instance, rhythmic properties of a work prompted me to place my attention in differing ways. While listening to Corelli's Trio Sonata op. 1/4 in A minor, I faced two vastly different situations based on the focus of my attention in the first movement. Each scenario afforded me a contrasting experience including not only the second movement but also the third. These three movements are shown in Example 3.7.



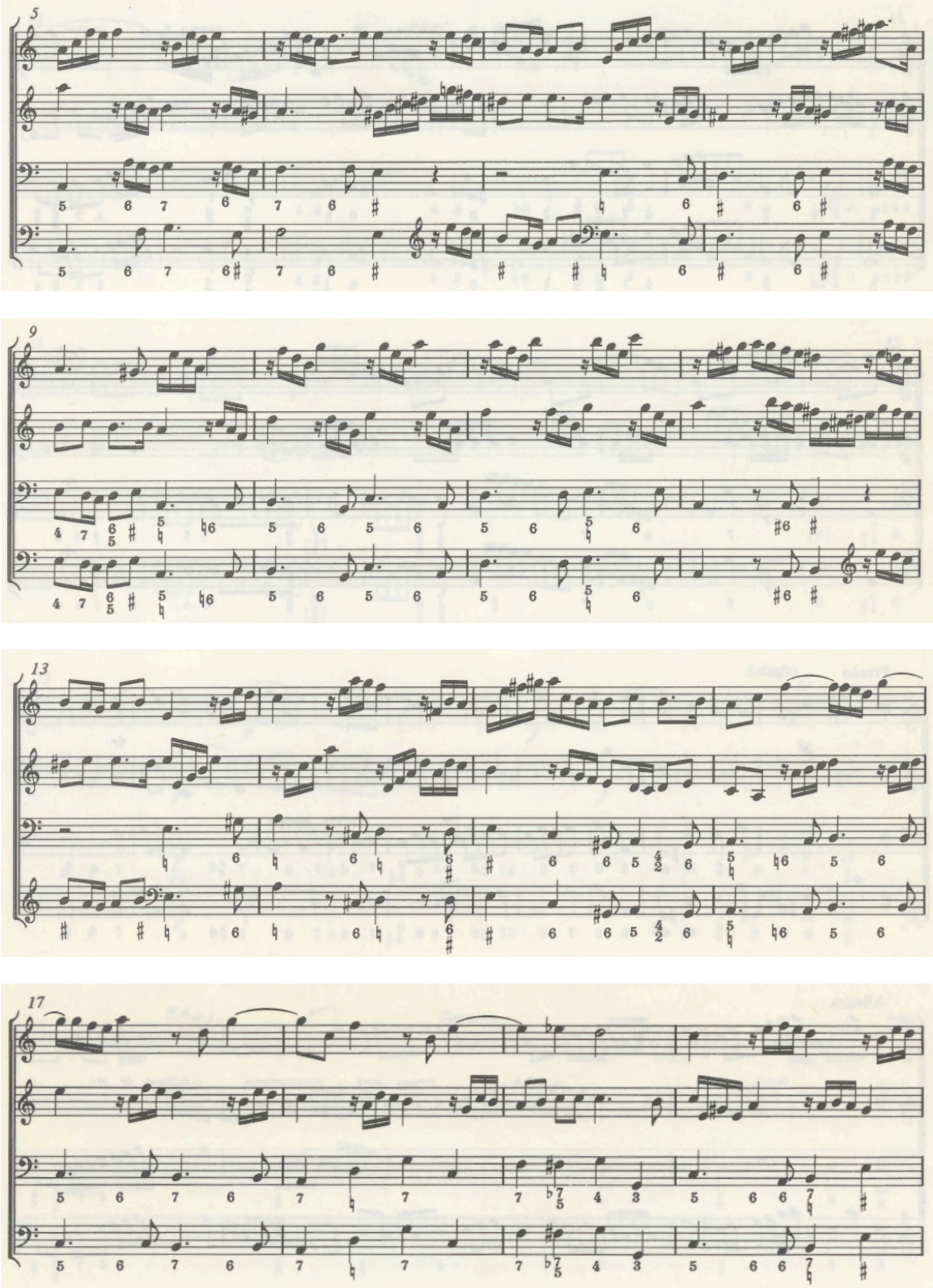

**Example 3.7.** Op. 1/4, I. Vivace, II. Adagio, III. Allegro.



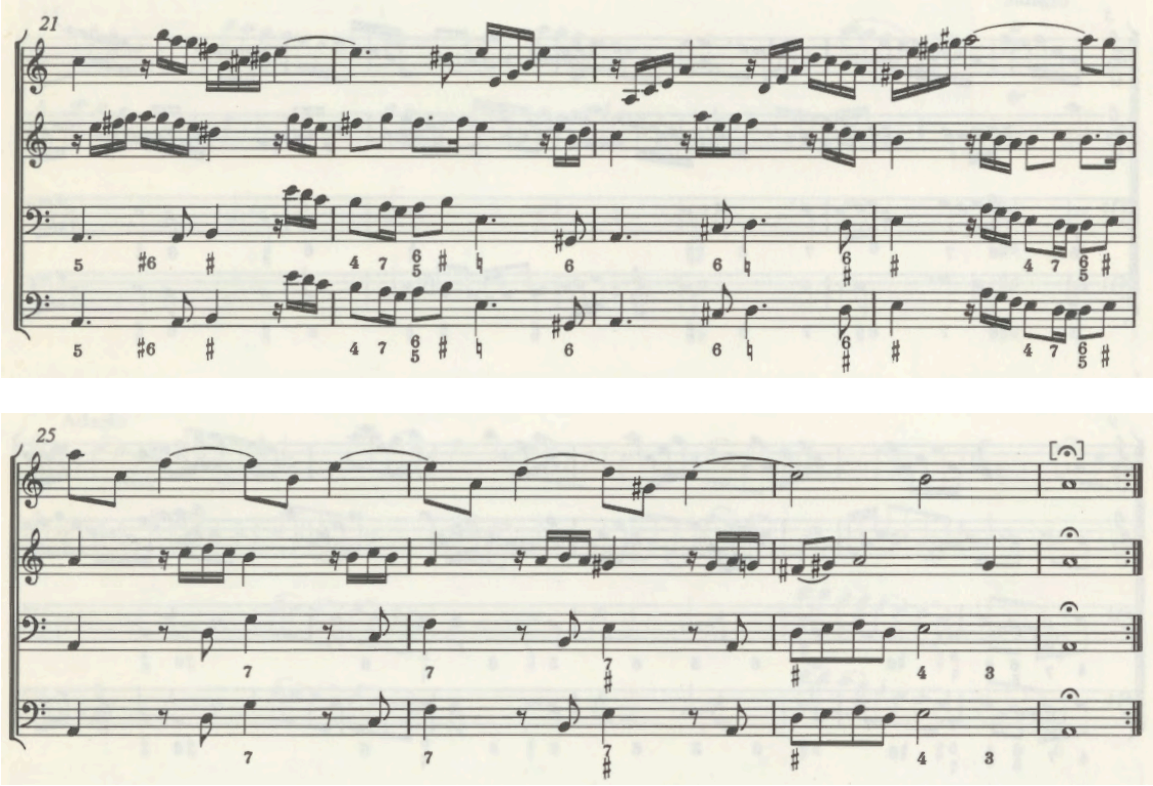

**Example 3.7**, continued.




**Example 3.7**, continued.



**Example 3.7**, continued.




**Example 3.7**, continued.

In the first scenario, I focused on the rapid movement of the shortest note values. There are both descending and ascending lines, occurring in all voices in the first movement, and their quickness was the aspect of the piece where I centered my attention. The switch to the extremely slow second movement was quite jarring. The various melodic lines felt to me as if they were pulling to try to go faster, while the rest of the texture seemed to be holding them back. Because I paid attention to the rate of speed of the notes, the second movement afforded me a great deal of tension, almost to the point of being uncomfortable. The third movement takes a moderate tempo somewhere in between that of the first and second movements (at least in this recording). After so much tension in the slow movement, this third movement afforded me a sense of relief and recovery.

In the second scenario, I tried to lessen the amount of attention I put on the tempo and rhythm. Instead, I tracked the phrase structure of the first movement. I could only accomplish this by mediating

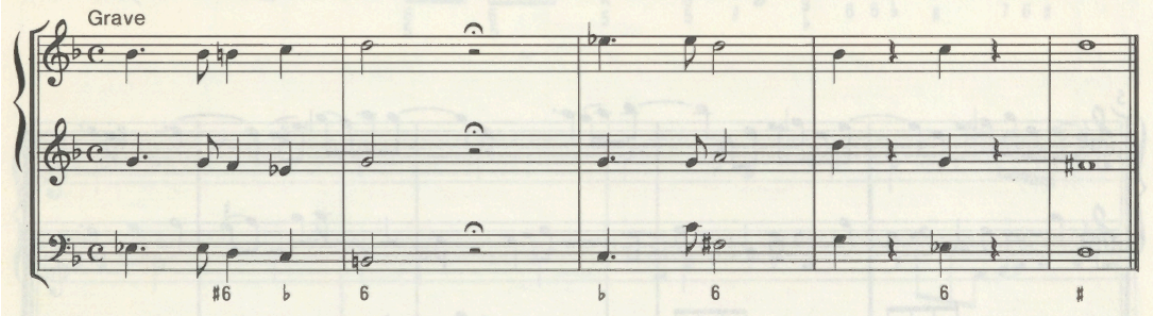
the experience through my knowledge of how phrase structure works. I focused more on the bass line, cadences, and performative aspects of phrasing such as shaping and breathing. When the second movement began, it still sounded noticeably slow, but all parts seemed together and steady. It sounded to me like the ensemble was playing slowly on purpose, not because something was holding them back. Because my attention was based on the smoothness of all parts together, in this scenario, the piece afforded me a sense of direction, heading toward a goal. Since I did not experience the ebb and flow of tension in the same extreme nature as I did in the first scenario, the third movement afforded me a sense of energy rather than a feeling of recovery.

### 3.6 Distractions

So far, I have been considering the possibility of listeners focusing their attention on different components of what they are hearing. In some listening situations, though, listeners may be distracted, not focusing their attention that much at all. The first time I listened to op. 4/2, I was working in my office on some other easy tasks—checking emails, looking up scores online, and planning the rest of my day. I distinctly remember hearing the first and second movements; the second movement intrigued me because of the interaction of the violins, which I explored earlier in this chapter. The next bit of music I remember hearing was a vivacious triple meter, played relatively loudly on the recording I was listening to. I looked up to check that this was the third movement playing, but it was indeed the fourth! I had unknowingly diverted my attention so completely away from the music that I missed the third movement.

Most Corelli movements are short (a few minutes long at the most), but the third movement of op. 4/2 is especially so. In several scores, it only takes up one system or less (see Example 3.8); and on this recording, it only clocks in at thirty-one seconds. There is not much in its five measures that would generally attract attention, either. Other than some improvised ornamentation, its texture is entirely homophonic. It has a *Grave* indication, and this ensemble begins quite slowly, slows down in mm. 4–5, and stretches out the fermata. In addition, the dynamics on this recording are soft, especially compared to the second and fourth movements surrounding it. These musical factors are not enough alone to

necessarily warrant a situation where a listener such as myself would be completely oblivious to the performance of the movement. However, my attention in this situation was enough to afford me this experience of missing the movement completely. Because I was listening while working on other things, I was primed to continue focusing on other tasks unless the piece gave me a reason to focus on it—something like a sudden increase in dynamics or tempo, or an unusual harmonic phenomenon—but none occurred. Thirty-one seconds was a short enough time that I did not feel like I was neglecting what I was trying to listen to.




**Example 3.8.** Op. 4/2, III. Grave.

Had I not been distracted by non-musical factors, my experience could have been significantly different. There is no reason that a listener *should* ignore the third movement when listening to this piece. In fact, I later listened to this trio sonata again, intentionally making sure I focused on this movement. When I mediated my experience through this intentional focus, I was positioned as an analyst; my goal in listening was to examine my own experience when hearing the movement in context and purposefully attending to the recording. Situated in this way, I experienced a great deal of tension through this movement.

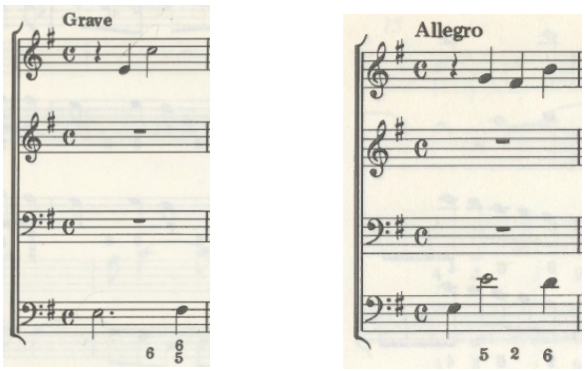
It was my change in attention in this later scenario that afforded me such immense tension. I focused on absorbing each new sound, waiting eagerly to hear what would come next, as I was listening without a score. The tempo and metrical freedom in the Belder recording prohibited me from fully

entraining to the meter. This, in turn, afforded me difficulty when I attempted to anticipate the continuation of the musical material, especially during the rest fermata in m. 2. When would the following phrase arrive? Even though this movement is incredibly short, as I mentioned above, this uncertainty and ever-increasing anticipation afforded me so much tension that I experienced the movement in the second scenario as if it were much longer than it actually was. Just a simple shift in attention caused the affordances of a non-existent movement (at least, to my hearing) to become those of a seemingly much longer one.

### 3.7 Performance Decisions

Choices made by performers can affect how various listeners perceive musical performances. In Corelli's oeuvre, one of the most noticeable decisions made by various ensembles is how they choose to add ornamentation, as ornaments are not written in on the score but are assumed as part of the style. Other choices include dynamics, articulation, and tempo, which can certainly affect a listener's experience. The continuo line in music of this time period adds an interesting dimension of variance among performances, as well. Not only can the continuo be realized in nearly infinite ways, but the instrument that plays it can also vary. For some listeners or in some situations, performance decisions might not change much about how music is experienced. In other cases, however, they may attract attention in such a way as to contribute to affordances.

Most of the recordings of Corelli's trio sonatas that I listened to at first feature the harpsichord as the continuo instrument. When I first heard the Belder recording of op. 3/7, however, I noticed that an organ plays the continuo. The organ attracted my attention not only because it presented a different timbre than what I was used to hearing, but also because the musical texture makes the continuo line stand out. On the initial downbeat of the first two movements (Example 3.9), the continuo starts before the violins. Hearing a full chord on an organ before the melody began attracted my attention, and I began to listen to the organ closely.

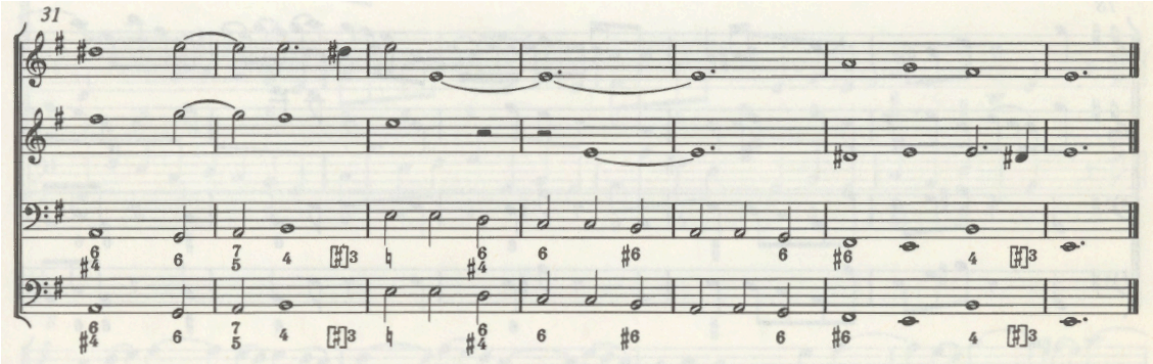



**Example 3.9.** The first measure of the first two movements (I. Grave, II. Allegro) of op. 3/7.

Since Corelli wrote op. 3 as church sonatas, playing the continuo on the organ is common. Although Corelli himself did not specify the continuo instrument, some editions of the score now specify the continuo as an organ part. How an organist realizes the figures, however, is up to him or her. On the Belder recording, the organist remains fairly active, even when sinking into the background. I had already begun paying attention to the organ line in the first measure, but the added interest from the performer's ornamentation and figuration held my attention throughout the first movement. When the second movement began, I continued to pay close attention to the organ. This is partly due to the fact that the continuo started before the violins again, and partly due to my enjoyment of the interesting voicing of the chords in the first movement. The performer's choices in the first movement afforded me a heightened curiosity regarding the continuo of the second movement. I could even go so far as to say that my experience in the first movement, while my attention was focused on the organ, afforded me even more attention on the organ in the second movement.

Although the third movement differs from the first two movements in that it starts with the melody and the continuo together, when I listened to it, I still followed along with the organ as I had been doing. Part of this was due to inertia. However, I felt especially encouraged to continue because of how loud the organ seemed to be on this recording, still prominent in the texture. Additionally, the last seven measures of this movement stood out to me as highly dependent on the organ for finality (see Example 3.10). The continuo has more motion than the violins and carries the harmonic changes of the phrase to

the final cadence. Mediated through my focus on the organ, the movement afforded me feelings of direction, purpose, and satisfaction upon finally reaching the cadence.



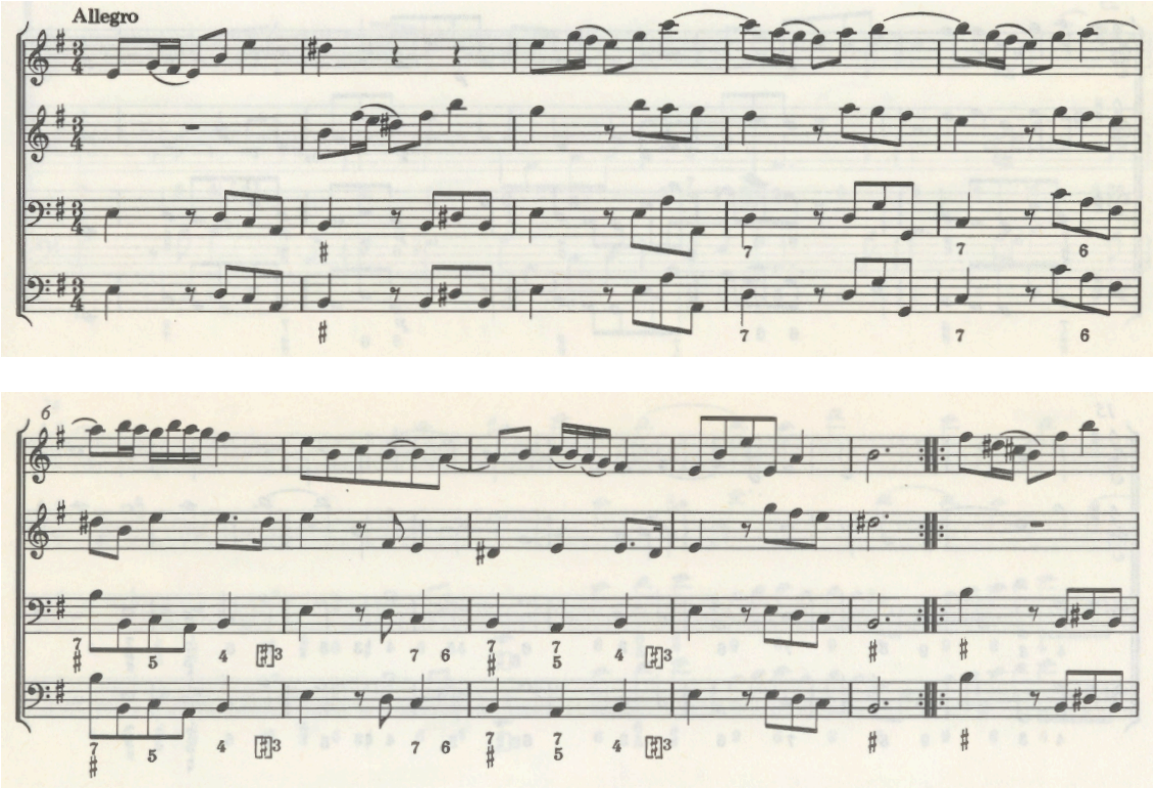

**Example 3.10.** The last 7 measures of op. 3/7, III. Adagio.

The beginning of the fourth movement afforded me a feeling of alienation right away. I had been so attentive to the organ part, but in this recording, I heard no timbre anywhere close to an organ in this movement. I felt that the part of the piece I had identified with the most was unceremoniously taken away from me. Since the timbre changed so suddenly, my reliance on that timbre afforded me confusion. Where did the organ go? My education about multi-movement Baroque works afforded me even more confusion. It is highly unusual to change the continuo instrument between movements, even if the instrumentation is unspecified in the score. I was left so befuddled by this moment that I could not enjoy the movement at all.

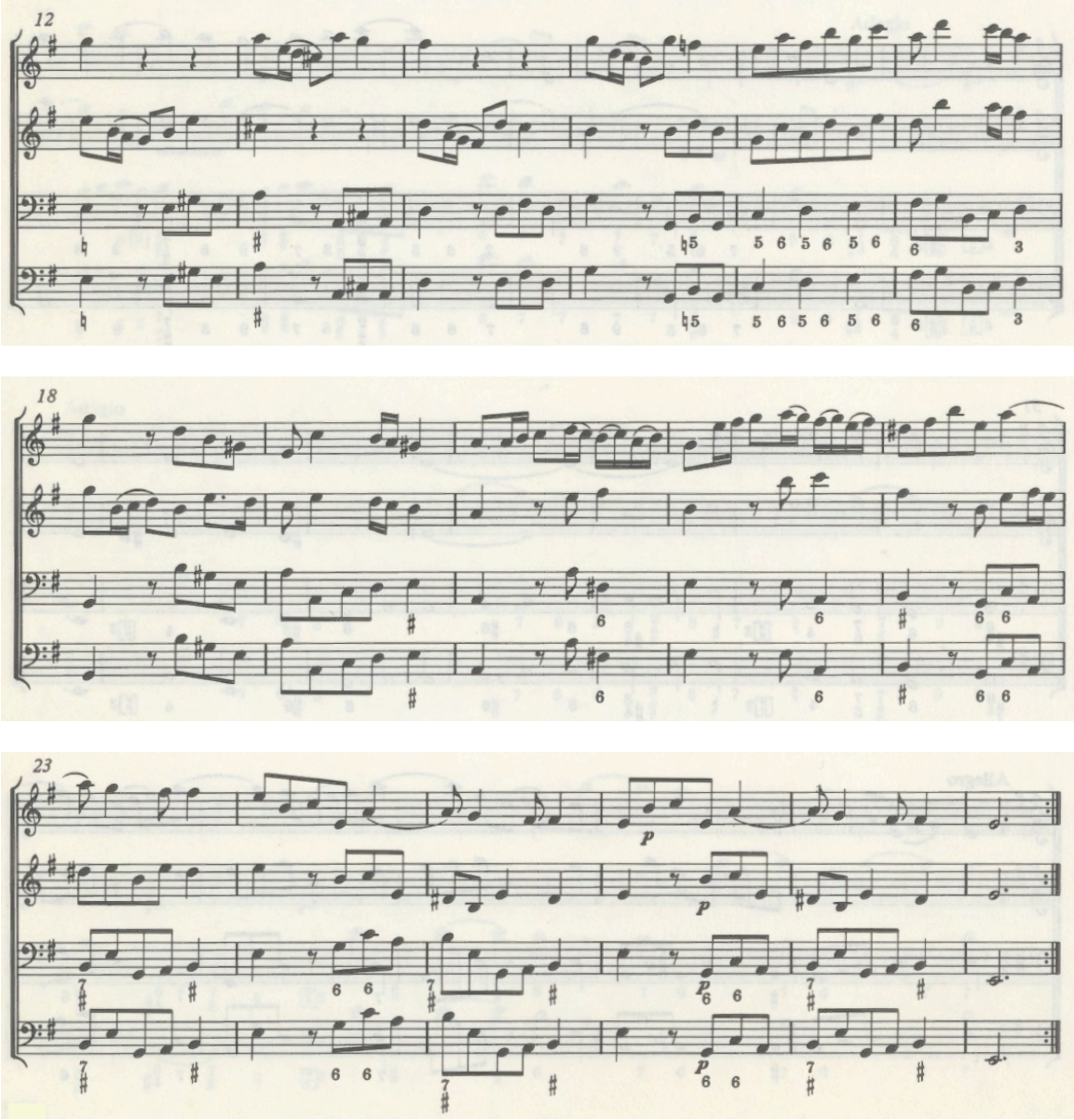
Incidentally, I listened to this movement a number of times before realizing that there is an organ playing after all. When I finally put in noise-cancelling headphones and turned up the volume and listened very intently, trying to hear any timbre at all resembling an organ, I was able to distinguish a very soft organ in the background of a much louder movement. Whether this was a performance decision, an unintentional dynamic problem, or a balance issue in the recording did not change the fact that it had afforded me feelings of alienation and confusion. When I realized that there was indeed an organ in this movement that I had neglected to hear many times over, my pride as an analyst and a seasoned listener

afforded me a feeling of embarrassment. These feelings were only available to me when I mediated my experience with specific listening equipment, volume, and attention.

I doubt I will ever be able to listen to the fourth movement of op. 3/7, without these past experiences coloring my view. However, other listeners whose attention was not so dependent on the timbre of the organ could have a completely different experience. The movement could seem quite pleasant to them. There are characteristic repetitive rhythms, sequences in the middle of phrases, and hemiolas near cadences that Corelli pulls off so well (see Example 3.11). Listeners who generally enjoy Corelli's music will likely also enjoy this movement. In this recording, a lute plays the bass line. Its plucked timbre provides a welcome contrast to the bowed strings. These musical elements provide an environment where listeners' appreciation of Corelli's style could afford them feelings of delight and comfort.




**Example 3.11.** Op 3/7, IV. Allegro.




**Example 3.11**, continued.

### 3.8 Summary

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, all listeners direct their attention to certain areas and with varying strength of focus when listening to music. These analyses show how attention can mediate listening experiences in a variety of ways, explaining some reasons that listeners' attention might vary. Listeners might focus their attention in a certain way due to personal or environmental sensitivities, and

there may be musical elements that attract more or less attention from certain listeners. Affordances provide a language with which to express that music is a conglomeration of all these factors at any given time. I hope these examples inspire others to reflect on their own attention in listening scenarios and to include issues of attention in analysis.

Attention is part of every listening situation, and thus it directly affects the affordances of music in any given scenario. In some cases, such as the ones unfolded in this chapter, it is noticeably responsible for drastic changes in affordances between scenarios. In others, attention plays more of a background role in musical affordances. It is not always appropriate to include attention in an analysis of listening experiences. Sometimes, other situational factors and types of mediation have a greater impact on affordances, and these should similarly be explored and developed in analysis. Chapter 4 suggests another such factor: expectation.

## Chapter 4: Mediating Experience through Expectation

### 4.0 Introduction to Issues of Expectation in Musical Experience

Our expectations, like our attention, can afford us different ways to experience music. Sometimes we form our expectations explicitly. If a friend tells you that a certain passage is exciting, you might listen to the work expecting to feel excited. Often, however, our musical expectations come from implicit knowledge gained from listening to a piece, genre, or style. If you know that the piece you are about to hear was written in the Classical Era, and you are familiar with the music of that period, you will mediate your experience through this familiarity. You will (perhaps unconsciously) expect certain harmonic progressions, formal structures, and melodic patterns. Expectations are often studied as cognitive phenomenon, and several prominent scholars apply these ideas to music and emotion.

For Leonard Meyer, denial of expectation forms the basis of emotional responses to music,[1] an assumption that, for our purposes here, we can use to help us make sense of listeners' various experiences. When the unexpected occurs, listeners try to make sense of what they just heard, sometimes changing their understanding of the music in the process, and often evoking emotions.[2] Expectations may be conscious or unconscious, although they are formed from what Meyer calls "habits" (responses to certain musical patterns learned from prior experiences).[3]

In his book *Sweet Anticipation*, David Huron also lays out several principles of expectation that we can use in discussing subjective experiences. Generally, expected outcomes tend to feel better than unexpected ones.[4] Also, we prefer things that are familiar to us,[5] although Huron revises this to say that we prefer things we have accurately predicted.[6] Like Meyer, Huron believes that unexpected outcomes

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[1] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 43.
[2] Meyer, 29.
[3] Meyer, 30.
[4] David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006), 13.
[5] Huron, 131–32.
[6] Huron, 138–41.

are the most emotional. This phenomenon is called contrastive valence. If we expect something good to happen, but it does not, we tend to experience even stronger negative emotions than if our expectations had matched the outcome. Similarly, if we expect something bad to happen, but it does not, we tend to experience even stronger positive emotions. The strength of these emotions has to do more with the contrast between expectation and outcome than whether the outcome was accurately predicted.[7]

### 4.1 Understanding Expectation through the Lens of Affordances

Meyer's and Huron's ideas of how expectations affect emotions can be viewed through the lens of affordances to help represent subjective listening experiences. Of course, this requires a slight transformation in language, but the language is not an end unto itself. It allows us to see these experiences in a new light. Affordances clarify that a combination of factors in the piece and the listening situation, including expectation, work together to form a musical experience. In the following analyses, I show how expectations help create affordances for listeners to have various experiences with music.

I base probable expectations on concepts from Meyer and Huron, but I am careful to attribute each expectation to certain listeners or listening situations. Additionally, although the main focus of these scholars is the evocation of emotions, I apply principles of expectation to various types of experiences, even those that are not explicitly emotional. The focus of each analysis is what might prompt expectations and what these expectations can afford listeners.

According to both Meyer and Huron, because of contrastive valence, if listeners hear something they do not expect, their emotions will be heightened—including surprise that an unexpected emotional event occurred. If they are familiar with certain pieces, gestures, or styles, they may predict how an unheard piece or performance will sound based on their past experiences. Depending on the particular listening situation, denial of these expectations may afford listeners especially strong experiences.

Despite the heightened emotions afforded by denial of expectations, fulfilled expectations can also affect experience. When this happens, they tend to afford more positive experiences than denied

[7] Huron, 22.

expectations do, unless some other aspect of the situation comes into play. If listeners correctly predict the cadence type at the end of a phrase, for example, their expectations could afford them a positive experience. However, if a hypermetrical pattern is interrupted, listeners' expectation that the pattern would continue could afford them a negative experience—and this experience would tend to be stronger because of contrastive valence.

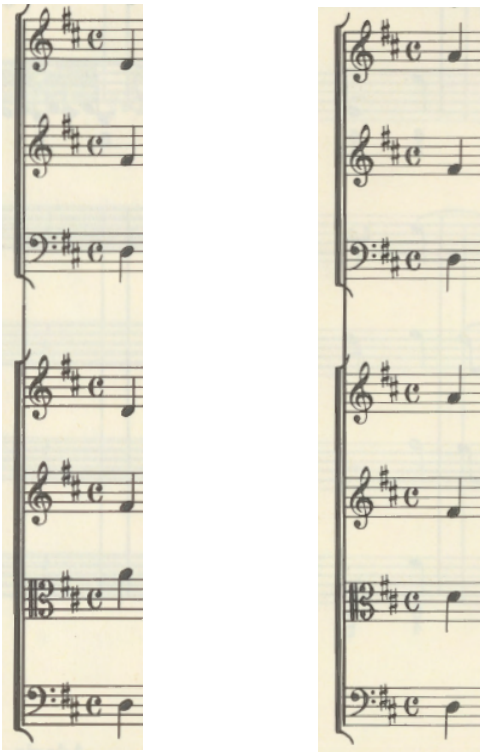
Of course, every time I say that certain expectations in certain situations "tend" to afford certain experiences, I am making a generalization. Despite the empirical research that shows how people usually react when their expectations are met or denied, these studies intentionally isolate environmental factors, as they must for the purpose of that type of research. In actuality, listening situations are messy and complex. Analysis based on affordances must deal with this complexity, since affordances and how they are mediated depend partly on environmental factors and differences between listeners. In the following analyses, I strike a balance between generalizations regarding expectations and details about subjective situations.

### 4.2 Repetition, Similarity, and Memory

Just as our past experiences can affect how we direct our attention, so our memories of past musical experiences can affect our expectations. Listeners who have heard a piece before will mediate their experiences with it through different expectations than those who have not. When a passage sounds similar to another passage previously heard, listeners may form different expectations about it than they did for the first passage. I have found that, for me, how much these situations help create expectations is based on the order in which I hear passages, the number of times I hear them, and the amount of time that passes between hearing them.

Concerti Grossi nos. 1 and 4 from op. 6 begin essentially the same (see Example 4.1). A D major chord sounds alone without an aural sense of rhythm or tempo right away. On the Belder recordings, both are played by the same instruments and even the same performers. The strings attack together, and a harpsichord rolls a thick chord underneath. The highest sounding note in the strings is an A4. The chords

are not voiced exactly the same, but they are close enough that they sound identical.[8] In fact, even after listening to these pieces countless times, the chords sound so similar to me that I cannot tell the difference between the concerti until the phrase moves forward to the next chord.

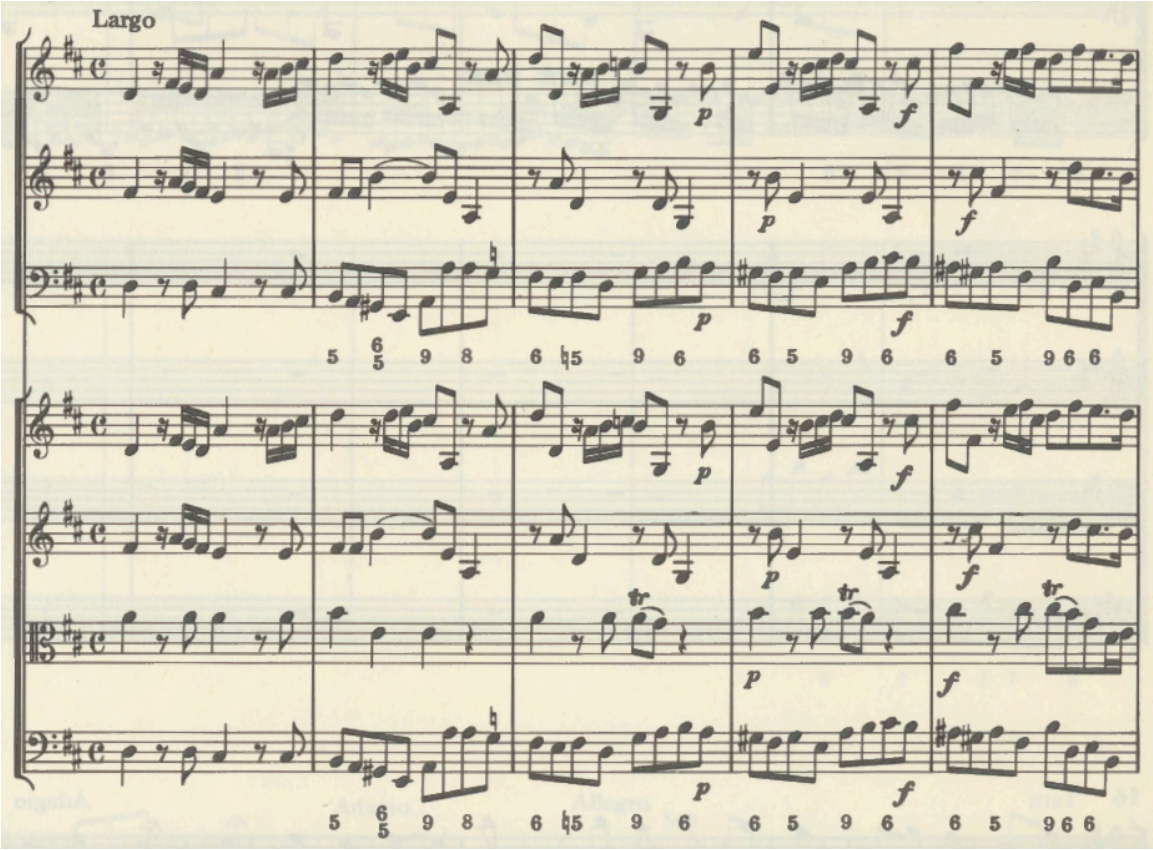


**Example 4.1.** First chords of op. 6/1 and op. 6/4.

The similarity between these openings can elicit expectations that afford certain emotional responses. Let us imagine that someone listens through this opus in order. Although the openings are separated by time, this listener may still recognize the first chord in Concerto Grosso no. 4 as identical to an opening already heard, either consciously or unconsciously. Mediated by such an association, this listener may expect the continuation of Concerto Grosso no. 1. For this analysis, let us assume that this listener perceived the first movement of Concerto Grosso no. 1 as stately at first, alternating with fast

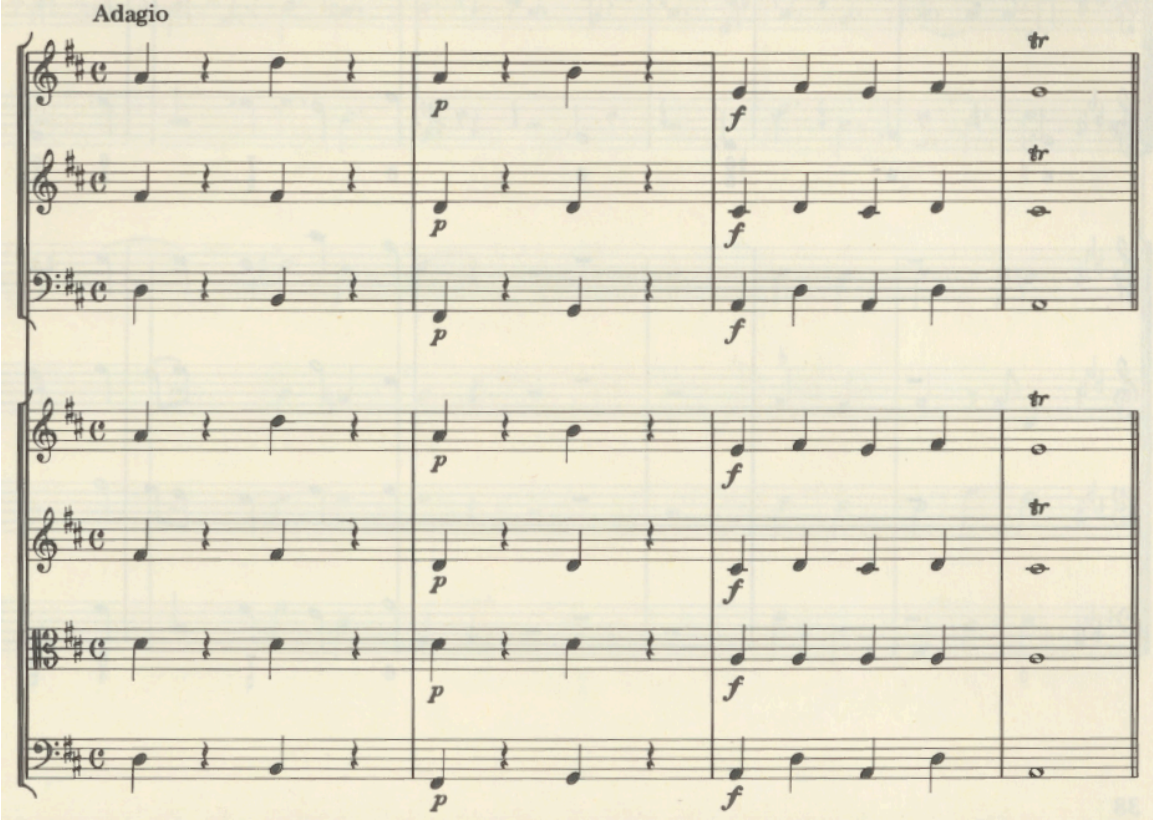
[8] It is not a given that every listener would hear these openings as exactly the same. The possibility exists of hearing that the voicing of the viola and violins are slightly different. However, I am assuming that our hypothetical listeners in these analyses hear them the same in order to demonstrate my point.

sections that afforded more frantic emotions. The D major chord would evoke the memory of these contrasting emotions. The opening of op. 6/1 is shown in Example 4.2.




**Example 4.2.** Op. 6/1, I. Largo (mm. 1–5).

Instead, a different harmonic progression with relatively stagnant rhythm follows the chord in the fourth concerto (see Example 4.3). These denied expectations would likely afford a surprised reaction. However, the comparison of this new concerto against a piece already heard could also afford other emotions. The slight delay of the musical continuation after the D major chord could afford feelings of aimlessness. After the first cadence, the rest of the movement moves at a quick tempo. The lack of slower alternating sections could afford this listener discomfort, as the movement may sound too fast and almost out of control.




**Example 4.3.** Op. 6/4, I. Adagio (mm. 1–4).

Suppose a second listener has never heard the first concerto but is closely familiar with the fourth, having listened to it many times. It is highly probable that the first phrase of op. 6/4 would afford this listener a pleasant experience due to its familiarity. Without the mediation of having heard the first concerto, there is no reason our listener would feel surprised or aimless. Similarly, after the cadence, the quick tempo that remains through the end of the movement, along with motives that rise to a high tonic note, could afford this listener feelings of celebration, especially if a pleasant mood has remained throughout the movement. Upon hearing the first chord of Concerto Grosso no. 1, this listener would expect the continuation of Concerto Grosso no. 4.

Instead, the music after the D major chord begins sooner than anticipated, and the chord progression is different. In fact, the music at this point of Concerto Grosso no. 1 is more than an introduction; it begins the first substantial section. The rhythmic interest and the extension of the section,

compared to that at the beginning of no. 4, could initially afford this second listener feelings of motion and purpose. The frequent alternation of fast and slow sections might also afford this listener a sense that the music is indecisive, due to its contrast with the more or less unchanging tempo that was expected.

There are other experiences which can generate affordances based on memory as well. Sometimes, listeners have expectations of how a piece will sound because of a certain performance or recording they know well. Corelli's "Christmas Concerto," op. 6/8, is the work of his I know the best. In fact, it is the piece that sparked my interest in his music. I first encountered the work in a Baroque music history course. Since we had regular listening exams, I listened to the concerto many times over the course of a week or two in order to learn it quickly. During this time, I listened to only one recording of it: the recording by Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert.[9] After this, I continued listening to only that recording for a few years, because I liked it and because I was not yet doing specific research with Corelli. I built up a distinct memory of what that version sounds like, which caused me to expect certain interpretative performance decisions.

The first time I heard a different recording, my expectations of what op. 6/8 "sounds like" were so ingrained in me that I did not like it. I tried a few different recordings, and they all sounded "wrong" to me. In particular, I noticed differences in continuo realization, tempo, placement and length of ritardandos, sharpness of articulation, clarity of individual lines, and emphasis on accented dissonances. The differences between what I heard and what I expected to hear afforded me a strong aversion to the new recordings. This was certainly no commentary on the quality of the recordings or appropriateness of the performances. My strong expectations did not afford me enough impartiality to accurately judge how skillful or even stylistic these performances were. The sense of those performances being *not the "right" one* was so strong that nothing else could permeate it.

I have since listened to other recordings more often, and this action has afforded me a higher tolerance for some other performances of op. 6/8 than I used to have. However, there are certain points in

[9] Arcangelo Corelli, *12 Concerti Grossi*, The English Concert, conducted by Trevor Pinnock, recorded September 14, 1999, Deutsche Grammophon B000VZQIBO, CD.

the work where the discrepancy between the version I am listening to and the Pinnock recording still affords me a feeling of irritation. One example is the second movement of the concerto. The tempo of the Belder recording is noticeably slower than that of the Pinnock recording. I am not sure which one a Corelli scholar would deem more stylistically accurate. All I know is that the difference in the tempos affords me a strong annoyance at just how slow the Belder performance seems to be. Even though the tempo is steady, it feels to me as if it is constantly dragging. If I had heard only the Belder recording of this movement of op. 6/8 for several years and then heard the Pinnock recording for the first time, I would probably have responded much differently. Instead of annoyance, the faster tempo than I was expecting might have afforded me feelings of urgency. I may have sensed that the ensemble was rushing, even though their tempo is steady. Similarly, the articulation is crisp on the Belder recording in a way that the Pinnock performance is not. I heard this crispness as an oddity. A greater familiarity with the Belder recording might have afforded me more of an enjoyment of its articulation, even feeling distaste toward the muddier Pinnock version. The difference lies in whether I mediate my experience of the Belder recording through my memory of the Pinnock recording, or vice versa.[10]

### 4.3 Meter

In Chapter 3, I discussed how I first heard the meter of op. 1/12, IV. Allegro, as simple instead of compound, as it is written. I outlined there how this experience afforded me certain jolts in my attention. Now, this memory of a past experience affords me the ability to prepare for hearing this movement in compound meter, if I wish. Expectation is an important part of this phenomenon for me. I mediate my current experiences of the movement through my expectations given my past experience.

When I first heard the movement, I expected it to be in the same meter that the previous movements in the opus were. If the music had been less ambiguous right away, that would have trumped my expectation, and I would probably not have felt unsettled at all about the denial of my expectation.

[10] Although some mediation can be intentional, such as following a score or not, this is an example of unintentional mediation. No matter how hard I try not to, I always mediate experiences of op. 6/8 through my memory of and affinity for the Pinnock recording.

However, the nature of the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic grouping, as I explained in Chapter 3, afforded me a sense of comfort with simple meter at first; and, in turn, the same musical elements mediated by my expectation afforded me the jolt after the first few moments, when I became aware that they could no longer line up. In fact, I believe that my initial expectations actually afforded me a greater jolt than I would have otherwise perceived without them. The discomfort that is sometimes felt when expectations are denied was heightened in my experience, mediated by just enough time to feel comfortable with what I believed to be fulfilled expectations. To then realize that I had been wrong in my perception of the meter made it that much more difficult to accept the situation.[11]

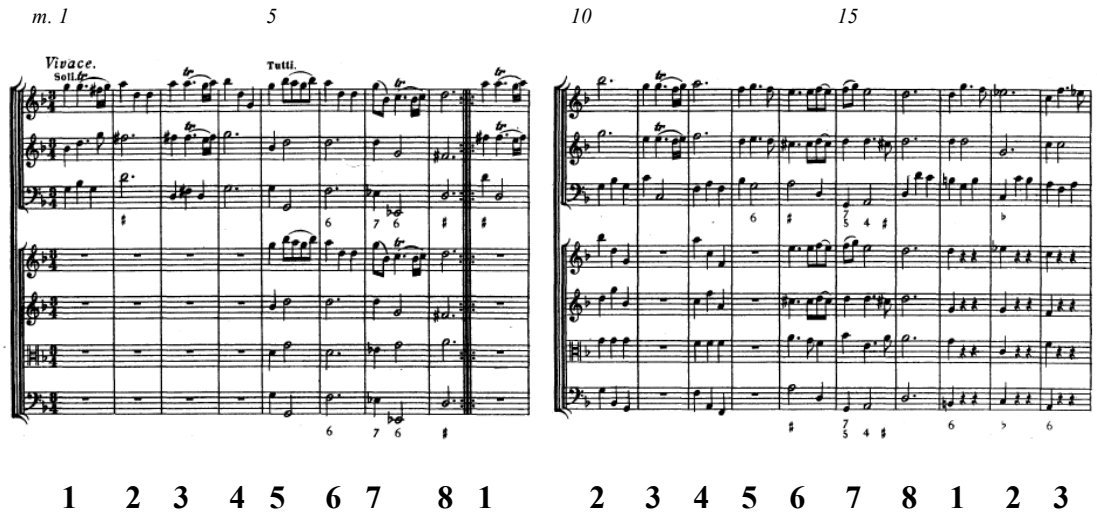
Now, when I hear this movement, I expect the jolt. And because I do not particularly enjoy the jolt in this case, I usually attempt to prevent it. It is not only my memory of the event that affords me this opportunity. It is also my expectation. Since I know to expect the jolt if I hear the beginning in simple meter, I am afforded a chance to listen intentionally for compound meter. Every time I successfully heard the beginning in compound meter, another expectation of mine grew stronger—the expectation to hear it in compound meter. After enough of this type of experience, this new expectation actually took precedence over my initial assumptions about the piece's meter.

Just as meter can create expectations on the part of listeners, even if they do not explicitly listen for it or understand it, hypermetrical peculiarities can affect expectations as well. The fourth and fifth movements of op. 6/8 provide an example of how listeners' perception of hypermeter could afford them certain emotional experiences.

Corelli's Concerto Grosso op. 6/8, IV. Vivace, is strikingly regular in its background periodicity. In Example 4.4, I show the hypermetrical structure of the movement using numbers in the style of

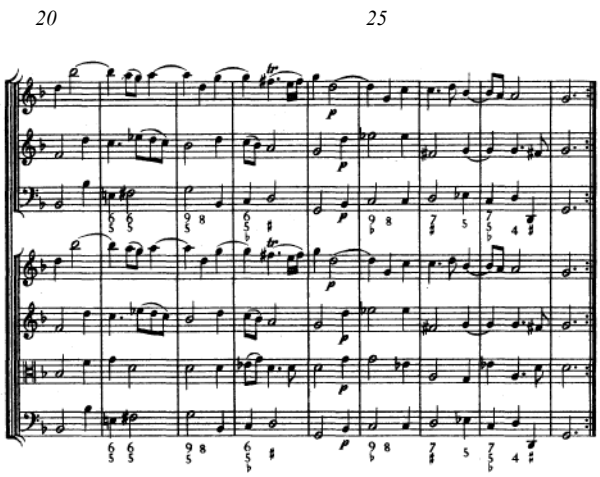
[11] My reading of this moment uses dramatic language on purpose. Of course, this way of hearing the movement did not cause a crisis in my relationship with music, nor did it linger as a traumatic experience. The discomfort I felt only lasted for a few seconds; but many aspects of perception, attention, expectation, realization, and emotion occurred and changed in that time, and my analysis attempts to draw out these details in a way that relates the strength of my experience to my readers, even though the moment was quickly over.

William Rothstein's theory of phrase rhythm on the score.[12] This example demonstrates an eight-bar periodicity with a common four-bar cadential extension at the end. The durational reduction in Example 4.5 further shows the hypermetrical regularity in the movement. If listeners pay attention to the hypermeter, whether they realize they are or not, they will likely sense the regularity of this movement. It could be a fitting background to a regularly metered activity, such as walking or dancing. The rhythm helps with this sense, since, other than the hemiola at the end, the rhythms are mostly even and straightforward. After hearing this movement, listeners may expect a regular hypermeter to continue.

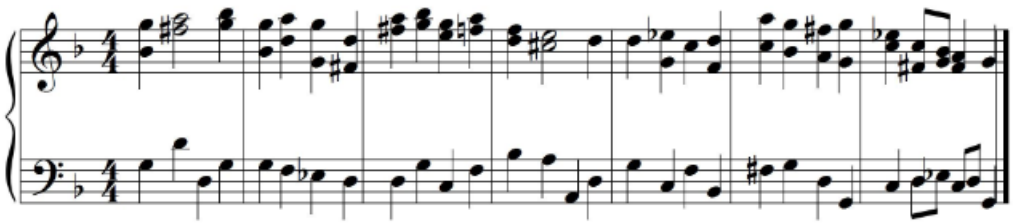



**Example 4.4.** Phrase rhythm of op. 6/8, IV. Vivace.

[12] William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989).



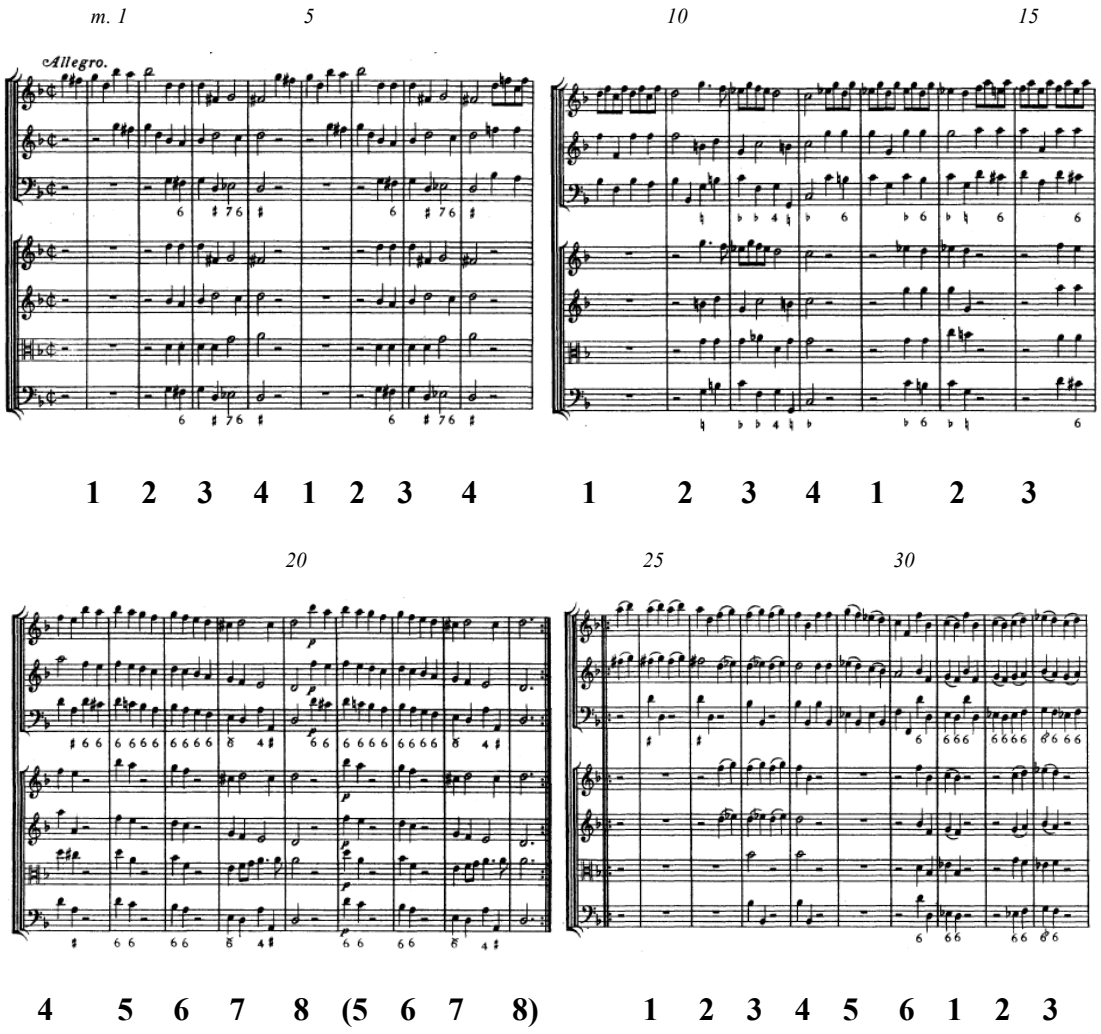

**Example 4.4**, continued.



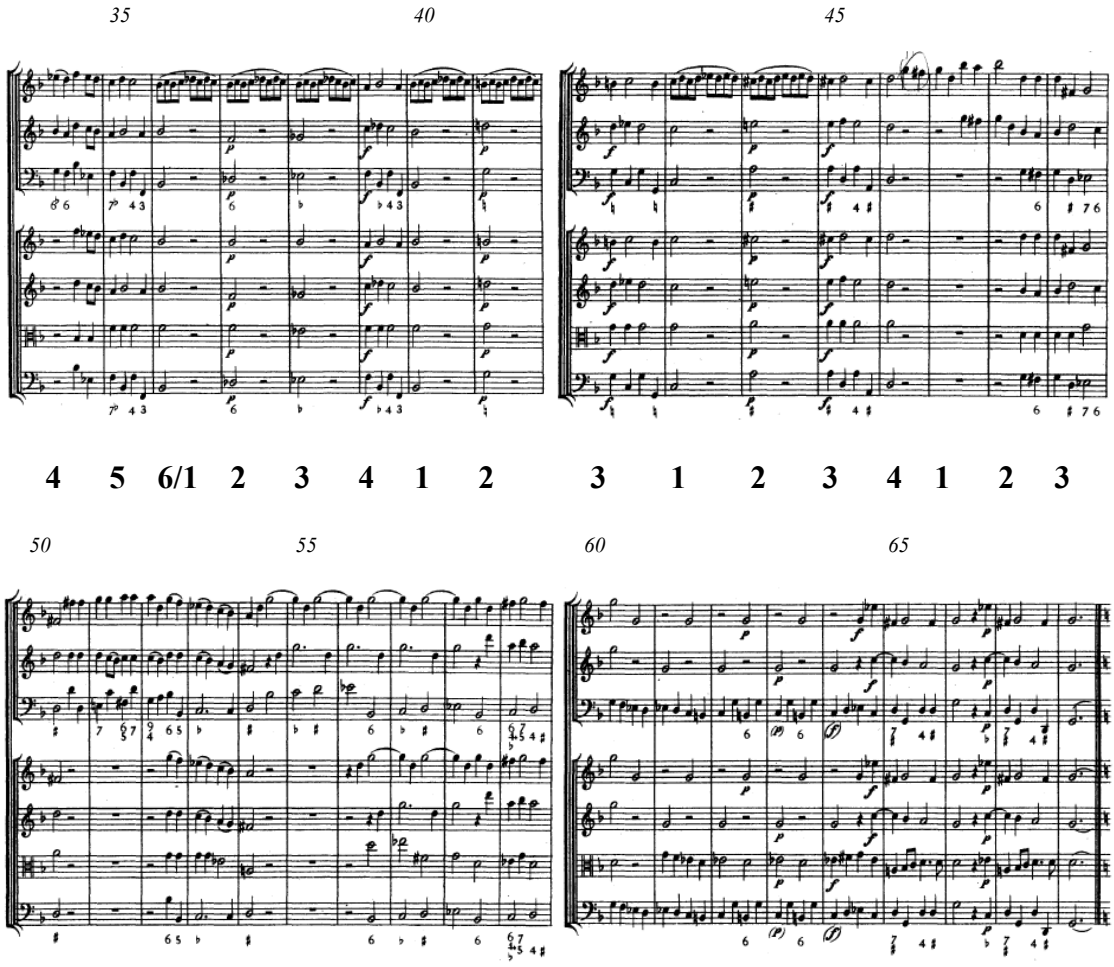
**Example 4.5.** Durational reduction of op. 6/8, IV. Vivace (quarter note = 1 measure).

When the fifth movement begins, although it is faster, it appears to have the same sort of regularity. The consistency in rhythm and the initial eight-bar structure may help solidify the expectation of continuing the hypermetrical pattern. However, the fifth movement soon begins to deny this expectation, becoming more unstable as it goes, through irregular and constantly changing group lengths, shown in Example 4.6. Beginning at m. 25, the next two phrases are each six measures long. After this, in mm. 36–46, the phrases overlap, each one seemingly beginning before the last phrase has properly cadenced. The three-measure group in mm. 40–42 may sound especially out of place to listeners expecting groups of four or eight measures. Example 4.7 provides a durational reduction of the second part of this movement. The constant changes in meter on the reduction indicate the changes in

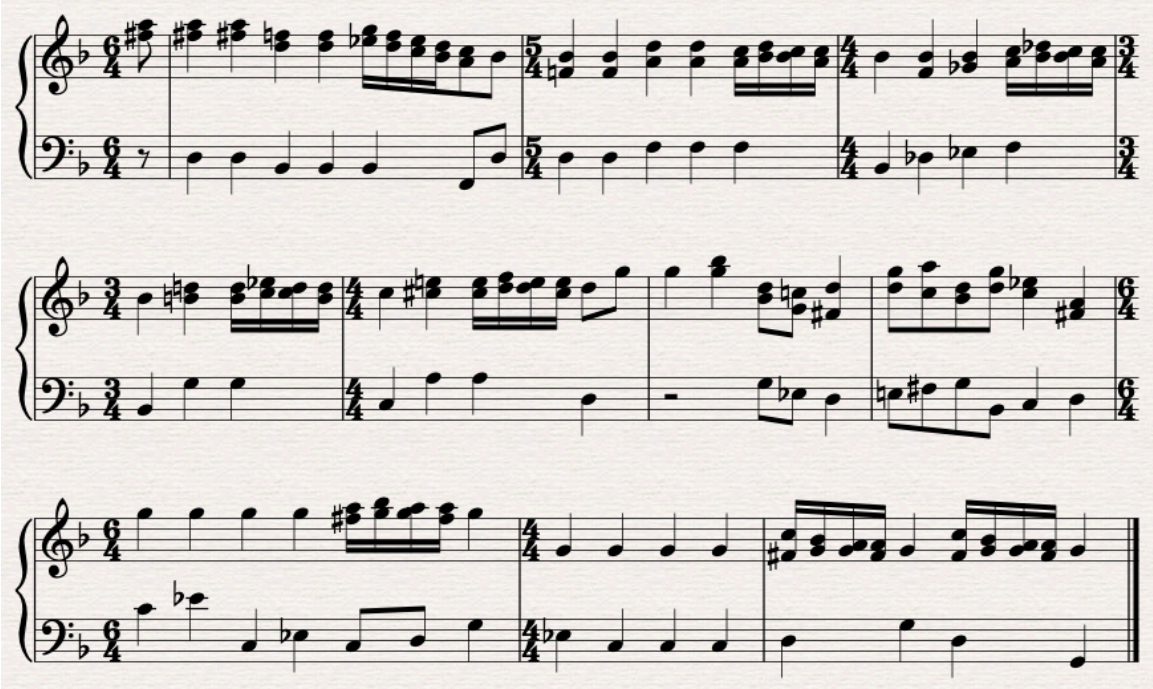
hypermetrical structure in this movement. When compared to Example 4.5, the hypermetrical contrast between the movements is obvious.




**Example 4.6.** Phrase rhythm of op. 6/8, V. Allegro.




**Example 4.6**, continued.



**Example 4.7.** Durational reduction of op. 6/8, V. Allegro (mm. 25–68) (quarter note = 1 measure).

If listeners expect the continuation of clear hypermetrical structure and equal phrase or group lengths, the denial of these expectations is likely to afford them disconcerting emotions. The unusual pacing in mm. 36–46 may afford them feelings of instability. The three-bar group especially has a chance of affording a feeling of being rushed. Furthermore, the repetitive rhythm and contour in the first violin, juxtaposed against unpredictable hypermeter, may afford sensations of urgency or desperation.

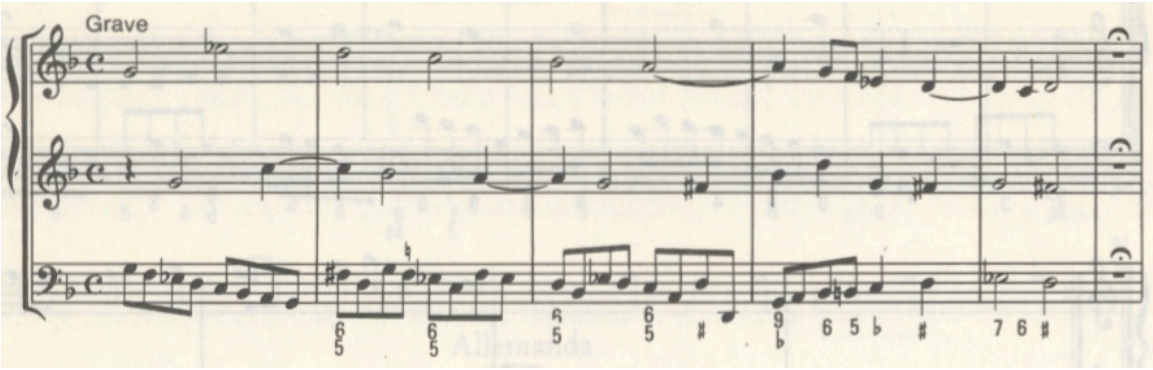
Now suppose in a second scenario that listeners who are musicians are told to expect hypermetrical irregularity in the fifth movement. Instead of counting measures or conducting, they are told to move a hand along with each phrase, indicating when they hear a cadence. They understand what this means and know they will not hear consistent phrase lengths throughout the movement, despite how it begins or what they heard previously. They will mediate their experience not only through specific expectations of irregular hypermeter, easily recognizable phrases, and clear cadences, but also the physical motion of their hands. When they hear the piece, their expectations are met. This situation would

not likely afford them feelings of instability or urgency. Instead, it could afford them a sense of connectedness throughout each phrase and rest at cadences.

### 4.4 Harmonic Motion

When I first heard the beginning of op. 4/2, I. Grave, I was afforded certain emotions that I initially attributed to hypermetrical expectations. The movement opens with a chain of suspensions beginning in m. 2, a common compositional feature for Corelli. Mediated through my implicit understanding of what Corelli's suspension chains sound like, after four suspensions, I expected a cadence. Instead, I heard another suspension. This denial of expectations afforded me a surprisingly moving experience.

This emotionally charged suspension occurs on the downbeat of m. 4. As can be seen in Example 4.8, it is not actually part of the suspension chain. Here the bass pattern changes; the dissonance occurs in the first violin instead of the second violin; and the suspension is a different type, forming different intervals with the other lines. Even though the end of the suspension chain did end up meeting my expectations, what came next did not. While the musical surface technically behaved appropriately, my experience did not line up. I was expecting a point of resolution, consonance, and rest. Instead, hearing an accented dissonance that created a ninth with the bass line and a second with the second violin, as well as a musical line that continued to proceed, afforded me an especially heightened emotional moment.




**Example 4.8.** Op. 4/2, I. Grave (mm. 1–6).

As I began to evaluate why I was so moved at this point, I assumed that it must have been my hypermetrical expectations that were denied. It felt to me like a timing issue; I anticipated the cadence on a distinct beat. However, once I looked at the score and examined the movement further, I realized that although my expected cadential moment fell on a metrical downbeat, it did not fall on a hypermetrical one (assuming mm. 1 and 3 are strong on the first level of hypermeter and mm. 2 and 4 are weak). Instead, I expected a cadence because of how the bass line and harmonic progression move in m. 3. The last chord of the measure and the first chord of the next are V-i in G minor, the tonic of the movement. On the last beat of m. 3, the bass drops an octave on the dominant note. Such a move often signals a forthcoming cadence in this style. Hence, my expectation for a cadence was mediated through my understanding of harmonic cadential cues rather than hypermetrical placement.

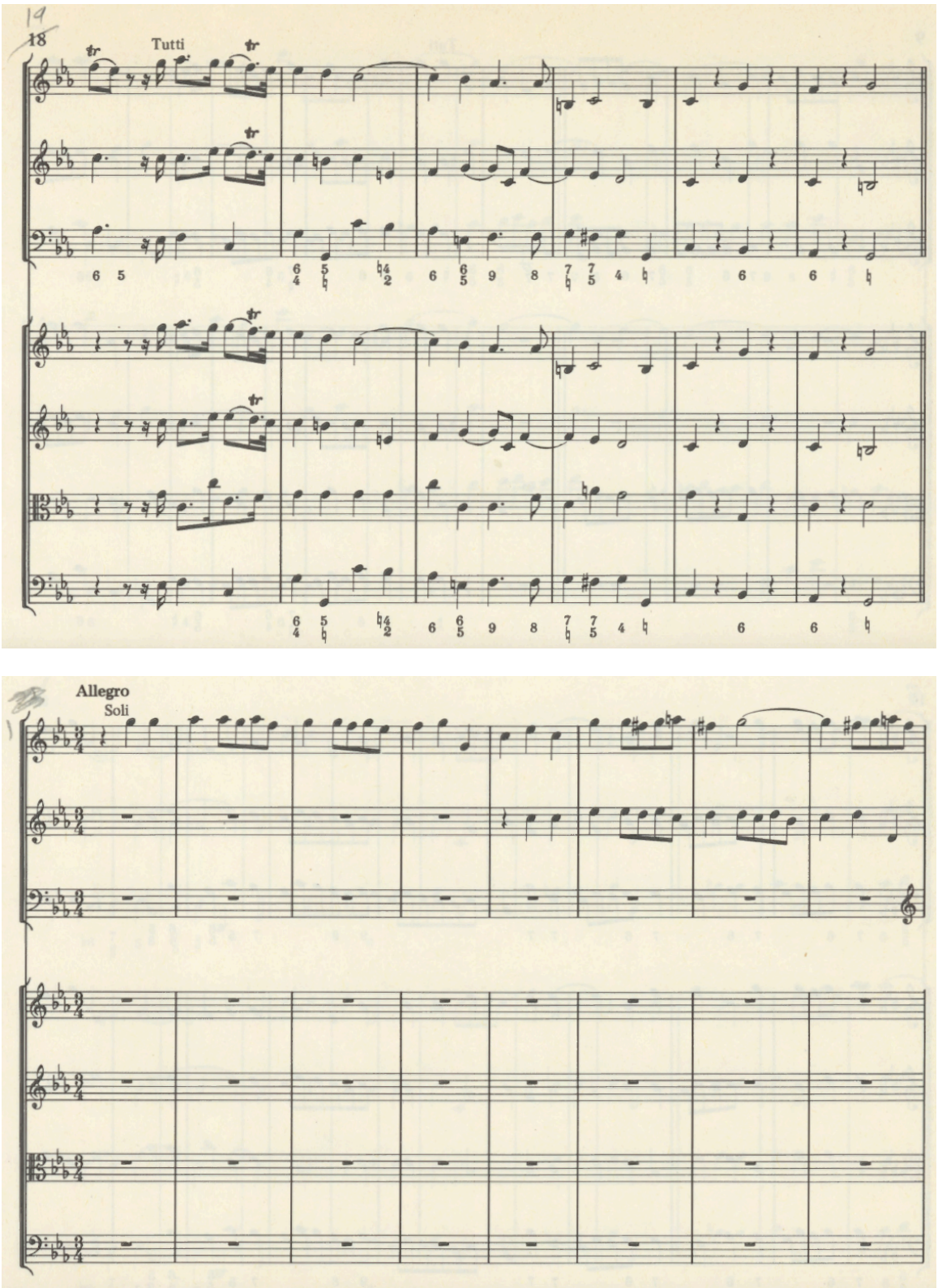
After analyzing my first experience with this phrase, I decided to deliberately mediate my next experience by counting hypermetrical beats, conducting in four at the pace of the half note. On this hearing, my expectations, and therefore my experience, were much different. I expected a cadence on a hypermetrical downbeat, the downbeat of either m. 3 or m. 5. In both of these cases, I still had denied expectations, but because of the music that occurs at these points, the denial afforded me diverse emotional experiences. The lack of cadence at m. 3 afforded me a weaker negative response, because the chord on the downbeat is in the middle of a sequence. The ongoing pattern of the sequence quickly smoothed over any minor discomfort I had experienced. Because the bass pattern and harmonic progression do not signal a cadence on the downbeat of m. 5, even when I was conducting along, it was hard to hear this beat as denying cadential expectations. The closure on beat 3 of that measure did not feel metrically sound, but my weakened expectations afforded me an analogous weakened emotional response. I felt slightly extended, as if I were stretching to reach the end of the phrase. It was not necessarily a pleasant phenomenon, but it was not nearly as moving as my first hearing of the phrase had been.

After I had listened to the movement repeatedly while thinking through these first two scenarios, my expectations began to shift. The piece did not change; but *I* changed, and thus *the music changed*. I

was still listening to the same recording through my laptop speakers at approximately the same volume. But as I learned the piece, I began to expect it to sound the way I had heard it every time. I no longer expected a cadence on the downbeat of m. 3. Instead, I expected the sequence to continue. I no longer expected a point of rest on the downbeat of m. 4. Instead, I expected the evaded cadence with a pronounced dissonance. I did not expect a cadence on the downbeat of m. 5, either. I expected it right where it is, on beat 3. In this third scenario, none of my expectations were thwarted. Because of this, I did not feel much emotion at all. I had a pleasant experience, as all my expectations were met, but the phrase overall did not afford me much more emotion than a general sense of agreeableness.

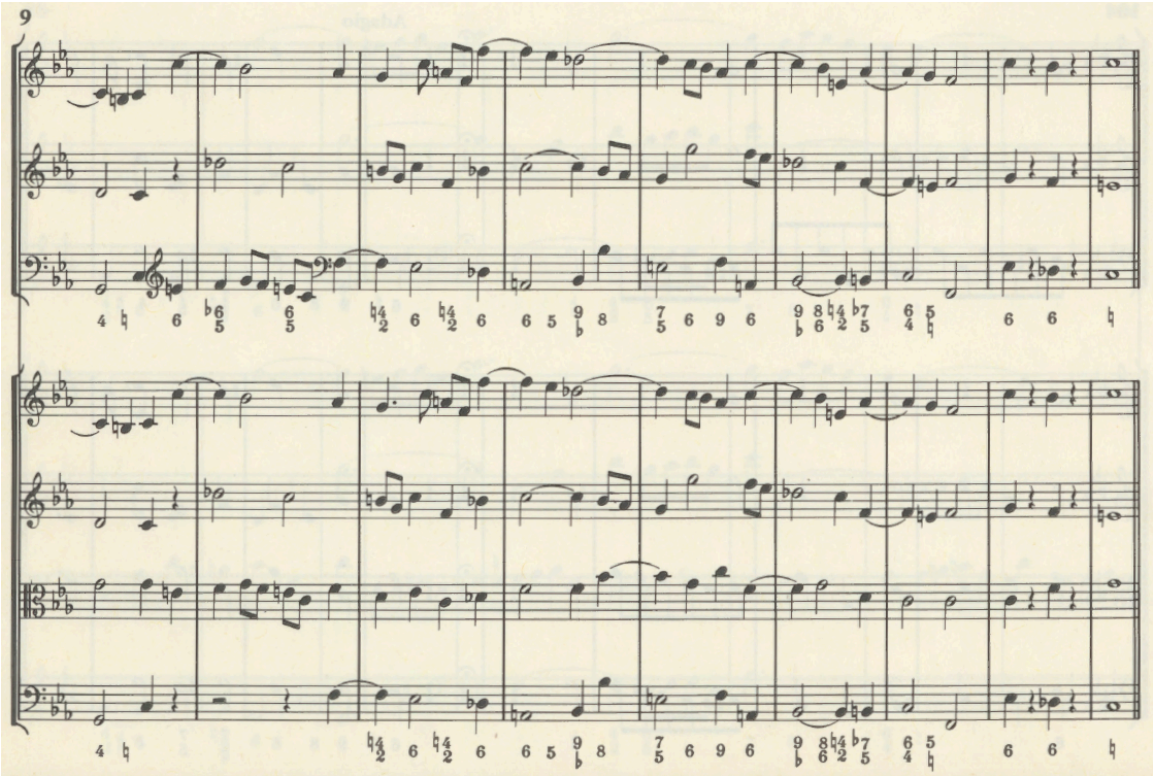
Sometimes, we expect certain tonal centers for movements or sections due to the music preceding them. One example of how this works in Corelli's music is when one of his movements ends with the sound of a half cadence.[13] Generally, when this happens, the following movement serves to resolve the V in a manner of speaking; although the cadence clearly makes a break between the movements and the chord does not resolve locally, the return to tonic harmony at or near the beginning of the next movement releases the tension we may feel from the lingering dominant. For example, the first movement of the op. 6/3 concerto grosso, which is in C minor, ends on a G major triad. The second movement picks up with a single-line melody still clearly in C minor, and the key is confirmed at the first cadence. Example 4.9 shows this typical example of how Corelli often employs this type of cadence at the end of a movement.

[13] I make this statement as a twenty-first-century listener with twenty-first-century ears. I recognize that Corelli was likely thinking in modal terms, at least in part, as several scholars have suggested. For one example, see Chapter 2 of Bella Brover-Lubovsky, *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). However, many current listeners will likely hear these as half cadences, even if this is an anachronistic label in some instances. In this analytical example, I will continue to call them half cadences as a label chosen by my ears, even though this would not necessarily be proper in a historical discussion.




**Example 4.9.** Op. 6/3, I. Largo (mm. 19–24) and II. Allegro (mm. 1–8).

The third movement of op. 6/3 also ends with a cadence similar to the ending of the first movement. First, there is a full cadence on tonic to close the movement harmonically; then, a short extension pulls the harmony back to the dominant. This is shown in Example 4.10. For someone who has at least a casual relationship with Corelli's music—or indeed, most common practice music—this cadence sets up an expectation that the fourth movement will begin on (or at least in) the tonic of that same key. In this case, however, the fourth movement does not start in this way. Instead, its tonic beginning is located at the local tonal level of the dominant—essentially, a fifth higher than expected. This denial of tonal expectations is likely to afford listeners who mediated their experiences through familiarity with common practice music feelings of confusion and bewilderment.




**Example 4.10.** Op. 6/3, III. Grave (mm. 9–17).

If a listener is also acting as an analyst, as I was when I first listened to these movements, the tonal shift may afford the listener even stronger feelings of disorientation. When I first heard this passage,

upon the beginning of the fourth movement, after the half cadence, I was thrown off. My strong expectations were dashed, and the strength of those expectations in the first place afforded me a stronger sense of confusion when they were denied. At first, I thought I had accidentally set my playlist to shuffle, as the movements sounded so unrelated to me. Because I had not anticipated a change in tonal center, I had not paid close attention to what the initial key sounded like in order to compare the two. Even after several close hearings mediated by intentionally listening to the tonal shift, I had a difficult time recognizing the relatively straightforward move up a fifth. The second key just sounded *not "right*." My expectations were so rigid that they afforded difficulty in aurally analyzing the harmony without a score. Another aspect of the music that afforded me a strong feeling of disorientation is the way the beginning of the fourth movement moves fairly quickly among key areas before settling down on a decisive cadence. I experienced this as disconcerting and unpleasant, especially as I was attempting to figure out the first or main key of the movement.

What kind of experience might analysts have if their expectations are first tempered? If I played these two movements for a room full of undergraduate music students, telling them in advance that there would be a key shift between them, and asking them to identify what that shift was, they would have a different set of expectations. They would be focusing their attention on a specific aspect of the music as the fourth movement began, and they would not expect it to begin in the same key. These expectations would mediate a different experience for them than the one I had. They would not bear the expectation that the half cadence would feel resolved.

With these different expectations, these students would experience the move from the third movement to the fourth differently. It is likely that this approach to the music would afford them the ability to figure out that the shift moves up a fifth in fewer hearings than I did. It also may afford them more of a chance to enjoy the change instead of being put off by it.

All the movements of this concerto grosso are in C minor except for the third movement, which is in F minor. This tonal scheme is common to Corelli's music; slow movements are not in tonic, and the

other movements are.[14] Listeners who know this or who are able to hear large-scale tonal areas well would also likely not experience disorientation when the fourth movement begins, if they are listening to the entire concerto grosso. In fact, they might actually mediate their experience through an expectation of a move back to C minor. Their expectations would be met, affording them feelings of contentment and affirmation.

After my disorienting experience, I approached the fourth movement again; but this time, I did not listen to the third movement at all. Eliminating the third movement from my experience eliminated the affordance of disorientation, since the half cadence was no longer present. My expectations listening to the fourth movement were only those of someone who has listened to a great deal of Corelli's music and implicitly understands his style. Because of this, the way the movement begins with short phrases tonicizing various areas did not make me uncomfortable at all. In fact, these different expectations afforded me a sense of familiarity and enjoyment, since Corelli starts other movements that way that I had previously listened to and enjoyed.

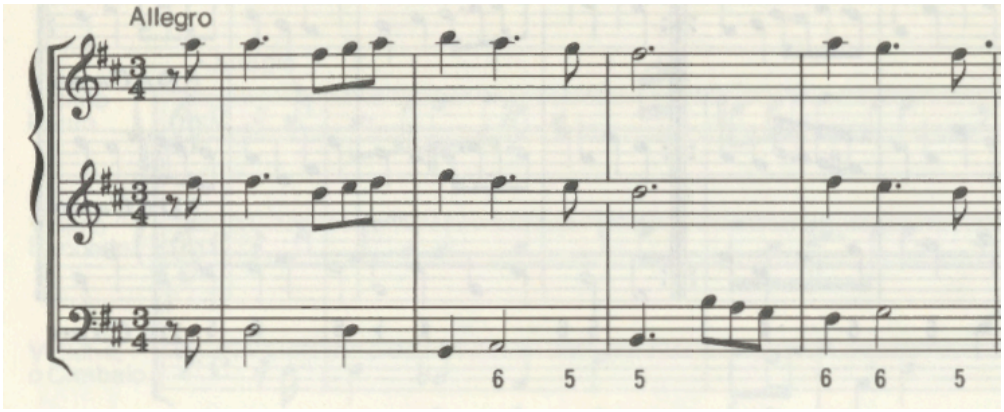
**4.5 Style**

Listeners' familiarity with a style, genre, or composer will form certain expectations that can afford specific types of experiences. Someone with an understanding of Baroque dance forms will hear Corelli's trio sonatas differently than someone who knows nothing about them. A musician who performs Corelli's works and understands how to include stylistically appropriate ornamentation will hear that music differently than someone who has never performed it. Listeners who have never heard Corelli's music, but are familiar with other Italian Baroque music, will experience it differently than those who have never heard any Baroque music at all.

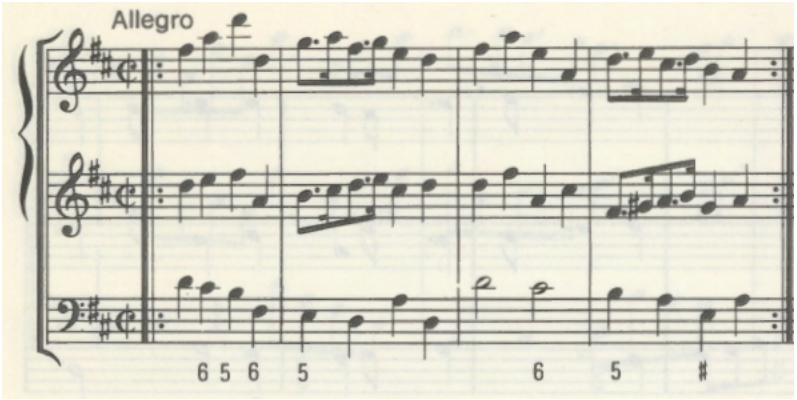
For example, suppose that a group of listeners unfamiliar with Baroque dance forms hears only the third and fourth movements of op. 2/1. The third movement is in a fast triple meter. Every measure

[14] Marc Pincherle, *Corelli: His Life, His Work*, trans. Hubert E. M. Russell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1956), 124.

includes a dotted rhythm, and most measures emphasize beat 2 (see Example 4.11). These listeners may latch onto the lilting regularity that this particular combination of rhythm, meter, and tempo provides. After entraining to this meter, listeners would probably hear the fourth movement in stark contrast (see Example 4.12). Their experience might be mediated by an expectation for the salient metrical qualities of the third movement to continue. Therefore, the fourth movement's duple meter and sparser dotted rhythms could afford them feelings of stiffness and rigidity. Heard on its own, the fourth movement would probably not afford the same feelings, even to this group of listeners. Their expectations mediate these specific affordances.




**Example 4.11.** Op. 2/1, III. Allegro (mm. 1–4).




**Example 4.12.** Op. 2/1, IV. Allegro (mm. 1–4).

A second group of listeners could have a dissimilar experience. If these listeners know the musical differences between seventeenth-century Italian Baroque dance types, and they know which types they are about to hear, they would mediate their experiences with a certain set of expectations. They would know that since the third movement is an Italian corrente, it would be in a fast triple meter.[15] Similarly, they would not expect this to continue. Instead, they would expect the following movement, a gavotta, to be in cut time.[16] Listeners' conscious expectation that the fourth movement will be in cut time would probably not afford them especially noteworthy emotions when the movement begins, because their expectation would be met.

**4.6 Summary**

The analyses presented in this chapter serve as examples of the insight that analytical inclusion of multiple interpretations can provide. These different viewpoints can encourage us to listen in diverse ways and to inspect our own expectations as we approach listening situations. Expectations are configured for countless reasons, from memories of past musical experiences, to metrical and hypermetrical entrainment, to knowledge of harmonic syntax and other stylistic norms. Indeed, there are certainly many more ways that listeners form expectations than can be explored here. It is my hope that future work with expectation will involve not only creating models and drawing generalizations from empirical work, but also investigating the outliers and dealing with the reality of how listeners actually mediate their musical experiences through their expectations in a variety of situations.

Like their attention, listeners' expectations are often a critical factor for how musical affordances are mediated. As these analyses have demonstrated, changes in expectations can mean the difference between highly emotional experiences and non-emotional experiences, between affirming experiences

[15] Deane Root, ed., "Corrente," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, accessed August 4, 2017, http:////www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006561.
[16] Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach*, 1st ed., Music: Scholarship and Performance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 50.

and uncomfortable ones. Of course, attention and expectation are only two aspects of musical listening situations. The analyses in this document barely scratch the surface of what is possible when we include listeners in analysis in active ways and acknowledge a spectrum of potential experiences without passing judgment on whether they are "ideal" or not.

## Chapter 5: Experience as Analysis

### 5.0 Introduction to the Analysis of Experience

Those of us who analyze music often hope that new experiences for our readers will grow out of our analysis. Many analysts choose to analyze certain pieces because of an experience they have had. But even when experience is a starting point for analysis or an end goal, it does not usually take center stage. In contrast, the analyses in this chapter do not just begin or end with experience. Instead, they analyze the experiences themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the outcomes of analysis of experience can vary greatly from those of other methods of analysis. It is a fruitful endeavor to consider how listeners experience music as it happens, not just in terms of attention and expectation, but rather holistically. If we believe, as I argued in Chapter 2, that music is experience, then analysis of experience is analysis of music. It is my belief that this kind of analysis will enhance our current traditional modes of analysis and, in turn, our thoughts and conversations about what music is, what it does, and what it means.

In this chapter, I analyze two of my own contrasting experiences with longer sections of Corelli's music. The first is my experience with op. 3 that occurred several years ago. This account outlines a portion of what I consider to be my first experiential encounter with this particular opus. The second is my general current experience with op. 6/8, the Christmas Concerto, which I have known longer than any of Corelli's other compositions.

Analysis of one's own experience makes sense for a number of reasons. It is difficult to put experience into words, and each time an account of an experience is transmitted, a little more will get lost in the translation. Directly analyzing our own experiences cuts out as much of this loss as possible. Also, since I am a theorist as well as a listener, I can use my analytical skills to attempt to separate layers of affordances that are mediated by my musical training from others that are not (and that may, therefore, be similar to those available to non-musicians). Additionally, on a personal level, the very act of analyzing

our own experiences can expand our perspectives and make us more sensitive listeners, even if we never share an analysis of our experience with anyone else.

Of course, my experiences that follow are mediated by the qualities I possess as a listener. I am a music theorist. I tend to analyze all music unconsciously as I listen, at least a little bit. I thoroughly enjoy Baroque music and I listen to it frequently, particularly that by Corelli. My job is to teach and write about how music works—what makes it sound like it does and affect us like it does. I have been a musician almost since I can remember, and I have been trained to listen in certain "musical" and "academic" ways. These ways of listening are further solidified every time I teach my students to listen in a similar vein. I am not good at dancing, but I like to feel music in my body—to sway, swell, lean in, bob, conduct, or hum. I am familiar with the score of some of Corelli's works, especially the Christmas Concerto, but I do not have a photographic memory. Therefore, listening without a score is still quite different for me than listening with one. When listening to these pieces, I almost never mediate my experiences by following along with a score.

In fact, I often choose to analyze experiences that are not mediated by a score. The reason for this is that it gets me closer to what music is like for a listener who cannot read a score or does not have access to one. One or both of these scenarios is true for most listeners most of the time. If we truly purpose to illuminate and validate "non-theorist" experiences, analysis of an experience without a score is one of the first methods we should consider. Generally, in this chapter, I avoid including score examples, because I posit that my experiences are better understood by reading the prose while listening without a score, as I did.

### 5.1 Analysis of Op. 3

As I first approached the op. 3 trio sonatas while preparing to write this document, I realized that I was especially unfamiliar with this part of Corelli's output. In fact, although I may have heard the trio sonatas in this opus before in passing, I had never consciously paid attention to any of them while listening. I realized that this fact opened up an opportunity for me that is rare in analysis: I could record

my true first impressions of a piece. Thus, the present experiment was conceived. Over a period of about two weeks, I listened through op. 3 from the Belder recording. I listened in order and recorded my initial reactions to each movement. I purposefully listened without looking at a score, so as to only react based on affordances of musical sounds without a visual component. The following analyses use segments of these reactions to show the kinds of insights these types of reflections can produce.

### 5.1.1 Op. 3, No. 1

Right at the beginning of the first movement of op. 3/1, I noticed the melodic descent. This kind of initial descent is common in other Corelli pieces, and I recognized the similarity. The affordance of this recognition was only available to me because I had listened to many other Corelli works and was familiar with his melodic schemas. My experience was mediated by my knowledge of Corelli's style and focus on motives in prior analytical situations. A listener new to Corelli's music would not have been afforded this recognition. As it was, I was able to immediately categorize this as a piece by Corelli, or at least a piece in a style similar to his. This would have been the case even if I had not known what I was listening to.

At first, I did not notice the continuo on this recording. However, when it played an ornament, it seemed to me to stick out a bit more, and I realized that it was played on an organ. I was expecting a harpsichord or lute based on my experience with recordings of other trio sonatas, and this denied expectation at this point in time afforded me the ability to focus on the line. When I was not attending to the full continuo, I found myself attending to the cello part the most. It seemed to stand out in the texture, even though it did not have the melody. At one point, notes were repeated that created a dissonance that afforded me heightened attention.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of my experience with op. 3/1 happened when the third movement began. Right away, I noticed that it was in a triple meter. I had not noticed the meters of the first two movements, but that knowledge was retroactively afforded to me once I heard the triple meter of the third movement. I had developed a subconscious expectation for duple meter that I did not recognize until it was denied. Triple meter in and of itself does not necessarily affect me in any particular way; but

during this experience, it struck me in a way that was only afforded by my expectations. My recognition of the previous duple meter could only come through the mediation of hearing the change in meter. If I did not understand meter as a concept, was not paying close attention to it, or did not have the skills to aurally identify the shift, I would not have mediated my experience in the same way, and the piece would have afforded me different reactions to it.

Later in the third movement, a moment that sounded like a minor inflection afforded me heightened attention. I tried to figure out how it had occurred, but the moment was too fleeting and the movement too continuously stimulating for me to be able to do so. This situation did not afford me the ability to analyze what had just happened with the harmony because of its passage through time. At the end of the movement was a particular long note. This note was not remarkable in the context of the movement. However, my previous experience with the first movement within such a close proximity of time afforded me a reminiscent experience that made me feel as if this note were special. There was something about it that reminded me of the repeated note from the first movement that had created the noticeable dissonance I mentioned. Without a score and repeated listenings, I could not determine what it was about the note in the third movement that afforded me this association. However, this experience sparked my curiosity as an analyst. If I had wanted to dig further into the piece, I would have started with that note—not because I thought it might hold a key to the style or structure of the work, but because I knew it held a key to my experience of it.

I noticed that the fourth movement was also in a triple meter, but the affordance of feeling shocked by it that I reacted to mere minutes before was tempered by the previous movement's similar meter. Although it seemed to move through several different keys and had a long, pronounced sequence at the end, which I enjoyed, I was put off somewhat by how short it was. My expectation for a longer movement afforded me a sense of something missing at the end. It seemed as though a section should have been repeated that had not been.

### 5.1.2 Op. 3, No. 2

My attention while listening to the slow, steady first movement of op. 3/2 was drawn to the long notes in the violins. I was unable to tell which violin was playing which line, because their registers were so close. Soon, there was a significant break, which afforded me the realization that I had been listening to an introduction. Almost two minutes into the track, I noticed a high note that became the top of a slow melodic ascent. Moments later, that same high note returned in a different melodic context. This situation afforded me multiple reactions that I experienced at the same time. On the one hand, the differing contexts afforded me a strong sense that the notes did not sound the same. On the other hand, my musical training in aural skills mediated what I heard to afford me the knowledge that the pitch was indeed the same. I knew this juxtaposition of experience would only probably happen to a small number of listeners, because very few would have that specific combination of affordances to provide the potential for the juxtaposition.

The tempo of the third movement of the same trio sonata was similar to that of the first. However, my experience of the tempo was strikingly different. I tried to determine what it was that afforded me this experience, and the minor mode of the third movement seemed to play a role. I was not sure why the mode would make a difference in this particular movement, when I do not usually experience this effect. However, during a short major section, I noticed that I again experienced the tempo differently. My experience was mediated by my knowledge that the tempo was not different, but still I could not shake the feeling that when the mode changed, the tempo *felt* different. It was not slower nor faster, but it was a different *kind* of slow. On a solitary hearing, I was not able to determine any more about what caused this experience. I only knew that the movement afforded me an unsettled feeling, mediated through my analytical mindset, because I could not figure it out.

### 5.1.3 Op. 3, No. 4

The very first thought I had when hearing the beginning of the first movement of op. 3/4 was that it began exactly like the second movement of op. 1/8, only much slower. This association made me start

listening for other similarities. My experience was immediately mediated by my experience of op. 1/8, even though the rest of the movement did not sound the same as it or remind me of it by other means. The only reason this experience was even possible was because I had been listening to op. 1 incessantly at that point in time, and the ways the various trio sonatas and movements sounded were fresh in my memory.

The second movement of op. 3/4 began imitatively. I was unable to follow this movement as well as I had many of Corelli's other pieces. There seemed to be too much going on at once for me to be able to understand it in only one hearing. This particularly poignant disorientation was mediated by my level of alertness. At the time, I was especially physically and mentally tired. It was also mediated by my analytical effort. I attempted to track the subject through different voices of imitation, but it passed by too quickly for me to learn it the first time. I kept trying to remember what it sounded like while also listening for its imitation, which was more than I was able to achieve during my first time hearing this movement. My effort afforded me a feeling of being overwhelmed by the musical situation. Even though I mediated my experience through my musical and academic training, I actually felt like I understood the piece less than if I had listened in a non-analytical way, because of the chaotic experience that ensued.

#### 5.1.4 Op. 3, No. 11

While listening through op. 3, I had frequently expected a Picardy third, but I did not notice any. Finally, I listened to op. 3/11. The second movement ended with one, which afforded me an experience of surprise. Even though I had previously been expecting a Picardy third, those expectations were consistently denied. By the time I listened to no. 11, my expectations were mediated through my past experience with op. 3, and I no longer expected it.

The first time I listened to the third movement of op. 3/11, I noticed how slow and free it sounded. It seemed less rhythmic than other Corelli works, even compared to the other slow movements in op. 3. I was unsure if this was due to an indication in the score, a performance decision, or some element of my listening environment that made it seem this way to me. The ending of this movement also

denied my expectations. It did not end on a Picardy third. In fact, it did not end on a chord at all. The last cadence resolved to octaves on the tonic note.

Interestingly, my experience with this third movement became much more intense after that first hearing. Later that day, I listened to it another few times. The second or third time I listened to it, I actually almost cried at the end. The octaves on tonic at the final cadence seemed heart-wrenching. I did not have this experience the first time I listened to it. This new experience was partly mediated through time, partly through my physical and mental state, partly through my intention in listening, and partly through my physical environment. The first time I listened, I was in my office, listening on purpose to take notes for analysis. But after I got home, I listened a few more times. It was the end of a long, tiring day, and I was not trying to listen for analytical purposes. I did not intend to find anything striking in a movement I had already examined earlier. I just wanted to listen to it again for enjoyment. My physical environment also heavily mediated my different experiences. My office was almost sterilely bright with fluorescent lights on a high ceiling, shining down at the plain tile floor. The wood-paneled walls had no windows, which made it difficult to sense the time of day. The office, which was intended to be shared by a number of graduate students, was filled with heavy wooden desks, a piano, and a table with too many chairs. It was a temporary office space for me, so I had not decorated it to make it feel more familiar or comfortable. Since it was summer and most graduate students were away, I was in the cavernous office alone. I sat at my desk and focused. By contrast, that night, I was sitting in the dark in my apartment, under a blanket on my soft couch, surrounded by an environment that made me feel cozy and at ease. I was primed to be emotionally vulnerable.

#### 5.1.5 Op. 3, No. 6

Although it places this movement out of order in my analytical tracking, I decided to discuss op. 3/6 last, because it relates to a previous analysis in a special way. In Chapter 3, I provided an analysis of the first movement of op. 3/6 based on my interest in and attention on the countermelody in the organ. However, while the experience I referenced was my first experience with this trio sonata, I was only able

to write that analysis as it stands after looking at the score and listening to the recording several more times in order to accurately explain what I had heard. Here, I will analyze the raw experience directly as it stood on the day it occurred, without mediation through the score or multiple listenings.

First, I tried to listen to what I thought was the "actual" melody. I assumed that the first violin was playing a higher main melody, and the second violin was playing a lower countermelody. I could only mediate my experience through that assumption because I had not yet studied many Corelli scores. Now that I have, I know that Corelli's voicings often overlap and imitate each other. The first violin rarely stays in a register above that of the second violin; instead, they share the same space. However, for my first hearing of op. 3/6, I did not understand this aspect of Corelli's compositional style. In my experience, there was a top melody, a slightly lower countermelody, a bass line, and an organ accompaniment.[1]

I soon grew a little bored with what I thought was the top melody. It was repetitive and did not provide much harmonic or melodic interest. On the other hand, the countermelody caught my attention with the way it filled out the texture, providing an interesting contrast to the melody. I found myself following along closely with the countermelody; and, as the movement continued, I began to think of this as the melody, with a higher line of harmonic support. The only reason I never fully gave into the idea that the countermelody could completely function as the melody was that it did not resolve to scale degree 1 at cadences. Instead, it moved from scale degree 2 to 3, while the top line resolved to scale degree 1.

Curiously, after looking at the score, I realized that this is not at all true. Both violins resolve to scale degree 1 at every cadence. I determined that what I had heard moving to scale degree 3 was a line played by the organ, whose timbre sounded enough like that of the violin that I was conflating the instruments throughout the movement. In fact, the most salient moments of countermelody that I grasped onto actually seemed to come from the organist's realization of the continuo in this recording. This future mediation through the score and advanced study of the movement led me down an analytical road which

[1] If my experience had been mediated by the visual cues provided by a live performance, I may have also been able to determine that the violin lines were crossing each other that way.

culminated in the analysis in Chapter 3, which some might say is more accurate than what I presented here. It is more accurate in that it describes what I heard and experienced in relation to the score and performance. But I would argue that the analysis I have just provided is more accurate in relation to my experience of music. Part of my experience was that I thought what I was hearing was the second violin line, and that gives an important glimpse into what it was like to be me in that scenario.

What good does that do for us? How is it helpful or important to understand that I thought I heard a second violin line, when in reality I heard a mashup of notes from both violin lines and the organ? What is the point of challenging traditional modes of analysis with something as messy as this? The answer, to me, is that this messiness starts to get to the heart of what it is like to listen. In the past, as an analyst, I would have never dreamed of constructing an analysis without listening to a piece many times and dutifully studying a score. But how many listeners have this mediation available to them? Their experiences are not worth losing just because they do not have the extensive training to put them into "proper" words. As I discussed in Chapter 2, it is frustratingly difficult to put experience into words at all and therefore communicate it to others. Why would we limit ourselves to "suitable" academic language or "appropriate" analytical turns of phrase? Only an analysis of experience would get us to this point where we can consider the worth of unpolished accounts of listening.

Since music is experience, this type of analysis speaks more to what music really is than many types of traditional analysis. This is true even if it is unpolished or messy—perhaps even more so when it is, because listening is rarely a "polished" experience. When discussing first encounters with a piece, analyses that not only explain but also demonstrate feelings of newness (curiosity, surprise, confusion, misunderstanding, wonder) can communicate them especially effectively.

Analyzing experience at different points in time can also show that music is dynamic. It changes based on listeners and listening situations, even in encounters with the same performance of the same piece. My two analyses of the first movement of op. 3/6 set a thought-provoking example of this. Neither of them take what I would consider a traditional approach the piece. Yet each gives its own perspective based on different experiences. My analysis here gives a raw account of how I experienced the

movement. I heard lines that could only exist in a listening scenario; they are not present in the score. These lines affected me; I felt initial boredom because of one and increased interest and attention because of another. Only analysis of my experience would have teased that out. Other analyses would have missed the possibility of a listener misconstruing lines and having that affect the way they felt about a piece. My later analysis of the movement, presented in Chapter 3, also misses this possibility, but it provides a different insight. This analysis starts with the same impressions as the one in this section, but it is filtered through subsequent examination of both the piece and my experience. It correctly identifies the musical aspect of the piece that I enjoyed the most—the countermelody in the organ—and explains that it afforded me a carefree experience. Most importantly, it determines why I experienced the piece in this particular way and distinguishes my experience from that of others.

Traditional analysis would not have come to any of these conclusions, and the nuances of my experiences would have been lost. However, it is important to recognize that the analysis of op. 3/6 in Chapter 3 would have been impossible without some level of traditional analysis. With a basic understanding of principles of continuo playing, I studied the score. I examined the motives and found imitation; I looked for scale degrees in certain keys at cadence points and noticed their resolutions. I listened to the recording over and over while following the score to parse out what lines I was paying attention to. Only through these traditional modes of analysis would I have been able to describe what I heard enough to analyze my experience in terms of my personal preferences. This is a point that needs emphasis: analysis of experience is not intended to replace traditional analysis. Instead, it provides another perspective from which to approach musical works.

Both analytical accounts of the first movement of op. 3/6 that I have included in this document convey my first listening experience fairly well, but I believe the one presented in this chapter to be the closest to my actual experience. Generally, experiential analysis more closely matches listening than traditional analysis. Because of this, it can allow us to draw more listening-informed conclusions. Analysis of experience can also encourage us (and our readers) to listen in different ways, to examine our experiences more closely, and to take interest in the experiences of others.

### 5.1.6 A Reflection on Op. 3

After listening through op. 3 for the first time, I reflected on my experience. I read through my listening notes for each trio sonata and made a list of observations. I found that I was able to draw some generalizations about what tended to catch my ear. Without using the terms "affordance" or "mediation" yet, I began to write notes about how my experience was filtered through certain qualities I myself possessed as a listener. At that point in time, I was relatively new to studying Corelli's music, and relatively new to writing about personal musical experiences. I find these raw musings illuminating, especially now that I am significantly different as an analyst and listener. It is easy to imagine other listeners writing similar reflections on their own experiences, giving us a glimpse into the personal nature of their relationships with music. What follows is part of these notes from June of 2015.

> "I'm finding that the things that catch my attention often are things that fall outside a 'normal' consonance-dissonance sort of relationship found in common practice tonal harmonic progressions. I notice sequences, suspensions, hemiola, ending movements on half cadences, imitation, key changes, modal inflections, non-diatonic chords, phrase extensions/truncations. These are things that fall outside *my* expectations due to *my* common repertoire. It's not that I only listen to common diatonic progressions, or that I only played or performed this type of music, not at all. But I do tend to focus on the way they sound, through teaching and grading things that are based on them (especially in the early stages of theory and aural skills which I have been grounded in for a long time). This speaks to a specific 'basic theory teacher' sort of context that I bring with me whenever I listen. I'm also building up a 'listening to a lot of Corelli' context that is starting to factor into what I consider ordinary or not. So some of the things mentioned in the list above I can start to recognize as being 'typical' Corelli. I do sometimes expect modulations or sequences. Sometimes they happen and sometimes they don't. I can base expectations on things that have already occurred in the specific piece or movement, or in that style of work by Corelli (i.e., trio sonatas). I'm not always right because I don't yet have enough information about his style to have figured it out—and sometimes he might not follow what I think he 'should' based on what I understand about his style—and sometimes I will still not expect what will happen because of strong expectations from my 'basic theory teacher' context, or some other ideas I bring."

## 5.2 Analysis of Op. 6, No. 8, "Christmas Concerto"

In contrast to the work just analyzed, I am intimately familiar with the Christmas Concerto, op. 6/8. This was the piece that sparked my love for Corelli's work and my desire to study it further so as to

better understand the emotional connection I felt with it. The present analysis focuses on my experience with the full concerto. As with my op. 3 account, this is more of an analysis of my experience than an analysis of the piece. Based on how I have defined music as experience, this kind of analysis gets at the heart of where music resides—how it exists for me specifically, at this point in time.

Of course, my experience with this piece is mediated in various ways. I have listened to it many times, and this is perhaps my favorite portion of Corelli's output. The familiarity and affinity I have with it certainly affect the way I listen and the types of affordances available to me. Additionally, I bring to each listening situation all the listening and teaching situations I have encountered with the Christmas Concerto, as well as all prior score study and analytical training.

I usually listen to the entire concerto when I listen to it. I experience it as a complete piece, with all movements intact and in order. At the same time, each movement seems to be independent. I experience the movements as separate entities with distinct experiential characteristics, but they go together as contrasting parts of a cohesive whole. The musical features of the movements do not necessarily tie them together strongly. Rather, my experience of the concerto as cohesive is mediated by my many past experiences of hearing all the movements in order. Now, hearing the entire concerto is the only way it sounds complete to me. This would not necessarily match the experience of listeners who had never heard the concerto before. In fact, if they were listening to a recording of all of op. 6, they would not even necessarily know where one concerto ended and another began, especially if they were unfamiliar with Corelli's style. Furthermore, if I had heard the concerto the same number of times, but the second and third movements were switched each time, I would experience the correct order of movements as disconcerting and incorrect. Mediated by my past experiences with the piece, my strong expectations would be destroyed, and the correct order of movements would afford me displeasure.

Similarly, other listeners would not necessarily split this piece into its six distinct movements without seeing the score. Given the variety of musical material and strong cadences within several of the movements, in addition to the attacca between the fifth and sixth movements, listeners new to the work (or mediating it in different ways) might draw these large formal divisions differently. My experience of

the work, however, is in six movements every time, because of my manner of mediation. When I first learned the concerto, it was for a listening exam, when I would have needed to know which movement I was hearing. So I made a point of learning the movements as distinct entities even without the score. Later, when I listened to it more in analytical terms for various projects, and then finally for the analyses present in Chapter 4, I worked with specific individual movements on purpose. Without this background, I may have segmented the work differently while listening, but this past mediates the experience I now have.

### 5.2.1 I. Vivace – Grave

I experience the Grave of the first movement as one long phrase, as if its purpose is to lead into the second movement. In this way, the first movement feels like a double introduction; the Vivace introduces the Grave, which in turn introduces the rest of the work. The Grave lacks formal boundaries even at the lowest level. There is no point of rest, nothing I experience as a cadence, until the end.

I have always relished the rich, drawn-out suspensions in this movement. I do especially enjoy suspensions, but there is something about how they work in this movement that makes them even more delightful to me. As I began to ponder why this might be, I thought about the other parts of the movement that I experience with similar delight. I enjoy the overlap and layering of voices in this movement, which sometimes make it sound like there are more voices than there actually are. I love the rhythmic movement that occurs in various voices; it is not much movement, but it stands out to me because only one voice seems to move at a time. Finally, I like how the harmony moves to unexpected places, but never anyplace that sounds odd in retrospect.

These musical features that I experience with the same feeling of delight are actually quite different. If I were to approach this with a traditional piece-centric analysis, I would look at these four factors in different ways and explain them with different aspects of music theory. But because I was analyzing my experience, and I experience them in similar ways, I thought of them as similar. In fact, I believe these specific musical features stand out to me and affect me in the same way not because of how

they are constructed or how they come about, but because of how I experience their overall function in the piece. Each of these serves the continuous nature of the movement, which is something that I particularly enjoy. Because I enjoy the total effect, I enjoy each part that contributes to it. This movement affords me delight at suspensions, layered voicings, rhythmic movement, and unexpected harmonic motion, more so than in most other works by Corelli. This is because they serve to push the movement forward without a break, which I experience as its defining feature.

Despite the continuous nature of the movement, it does not feel tense to me. It just feels like it is not yet ready to conclude. The slow tempo likely contributes to this experience. Instead of pressing ahead with urgency, the movement seems to just continue, calmly but steadily. At no point do I experience a cadence as specifically imminent. Although cadences are evaded throughout, no measure seems more likely to me to suggest a cadence than the others. None of the evasions are what I would refer to as sharp; it simply seems like the last measure is the first place where every voice is ready to rest at the same time.

Even so, while this movement is calm, it evokes passion in me. Instead of tension, though, I feel yearning—I want to lean forward, to help it along. But I do not want it to go faster. The slow tempo actually aids the depth of my experience. I have time to appreciate each rich suspension and to give each voice my full attention when it leads the others. I am able to focus on the particular tool of evasion in each moment.

I do not hear a strong melody in this movement. I am not sure if another listener could experience a strong melody, or if the piece does not provide one. All I know is that the movement, as I experience it, affords me no clear melodic line. When I hum along, I jump between voices. My humming "melody" tends to follow the rhythmic movement and suspensions. The act of humming what I hear as the most singable aspects, which happen to be the tools of evasion, further mediates my experience as enjoying their prevalence.

### 5.2.2 II. Allegro

My current experience of the second movement is largely centered around issues of hypermeter and phrase rhythm. If approaching analysis by score study, this is not where I would focus. Even when I first listened to this movement, I did not think of it in hypermetrical terms. But now, my experience is different, because of how my experiences now are mediated. In general, my hypermetrical experiences are all mediated by my knowledge of what hypermeter is, practice hearing the difference between regular and irregular hypermeter, and implicit expectation and understanding of regular phrase lengths due to my training and listening preferences. Often, my hypermetrical experiences are further mediated by physical movement. I tap my foot, sway, or bounce to help myself experience hypermetrical downbeats. Additionally, my recognition and interpretation of musical features such as motivic repetitions, harmonic structure, cadences, and accents mediate all my metrical and hypermetrical experiences. However, in this specific instance, I believe there are extra reasons that I currently experience a strong hypermetrical presence, especially considering that this has not always been the case.

To begin an analysis of my experience, it is worth noting that in Chapter 4, I talked about the fourth and fifth movements in terms of hypermeter and phrase rhythm. Previously, I had examined how hypermeter works in those movements as part of a class assignment. However, those are not the movements where I now sense these issues. I can think about them if I want, but they are not the most salient features to me, as they are when I experience the second movement.

The reason for this is that now this particular aspect of my experience is mediated through temporal proximity, repetition, and emphasis. A month or two before sitting down to prepare this analysis, I assigned this movement to a class of graduate students to analyze using theories of hypermeter and phrase rhythm. The process of assigning, discussing, and grading the essay made it so that I had recently, and repeatedly, been listening to this movement specifically thinking about phrase rhythm. When preparing for the class, I knew I wanted to assign them a Corelli movement that had irregular phrase rhythms in it. I started listening through the Christmas Concerto, specifically listening for salient examples of this. When I got to this movement, I realized it would work well and did not listen to the rest.

I listened to it a few times while deciding how to introduce it in class; we played it a number of times in class to begin working on it; students gave presentations on their interpretations of it the following week; and I then read all their essays discussing hypermeter and phrase rhythm.[2] A few weeks later, I played the same recording for the class as a different type of listening exercise. Although I did not instruct them to think about phrase rhythm, I found myself experiencing it anyway.

Previous to this analytical excursion in my teaching, I did not experience this movement as strongly in terms of phrase rhythm. My pedagogical focus afforded me an overwhelming sense of this. Once I am distanced from this by a significant span of time, I am curious as to whether I will still experience the movement in this way, or if I will begin to mediate it differently.

### 5.2.3 III. Adagio – Allegro – Adagio

An analysis of my experience of the third movement of the Christmas Concerto must focus on the difference between the Adagio sections and the Allegro section. Specifically, I experience a dissimilarity in the amount and type of tension I feel between the sections. To me, the Allegro sounds more urgent because of its contrast against the Adagio. It has a faster tempo, a homophonic texture rather than a polyphonic one, a constant and driving rhythm, and a more jagged articulation. And although it has sequences in it just like the Adagio, the Allegro also has a stronger functional progression throughout.

The Adagio also has musical features that I hear that indicate tension. It has a good deal of suspensions and a more intricate contrapuntal structure than the Allegro. The first Adagio section even ends on a half cadence, giving it an inconclusive sound. If I were analyzing the piece instead of my experience, I might expect there to be more tension in the Adagio because of these factors. I concede that others' experiences may fit this reading as well. However, my experience favors the drive afforded by the rhythm, tempo, and harmonic progression of the Allegro.

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[2] Although I did not literally hear the movement during each presentation and while grading each essay, I still heard it in my head from my memory of the recording. I would argue that this type of "listening" contributed to the repetition of the piece.

### 5.2.4 IV. Vivace

My experience of the Vivace is that it sounds like a dance. If I were conducting a traditional analysis of the piece, I would likely focus on the clarity of the form compared to the other movements of this concerto and the straightforward hypermeter (as I did in Chapter 4). While I do experience those aspects of the movement, there is another feature I experience much more strongly each and every time I listen to it. There is a constant emphasis on beat 2 of every 6-beat group (two measures). Often, there is a trill on this beat while most of the voices hold a half note. This emphasis even continues somewhat through the hemiolas in the second half. If I knew my dance types better, I would use this knowledge to mediate my experience. I could imagine a certain type of dance that would match this rhythmic consistency. However, my lack of knowledge about dance types and steps means that this movement does not afford me such an image.

### 5.2.5 V. Allegro

To analyze my experience of the fifth movement, I immediately think of form. But my perspective on the form of this movement is completely different than it would be if I used my usual formal analytical skills. Like most analysts, I have traditionally tended to determine the form of a piece based on harmonic motion, cadences, key areas, melodic themes, and motivic development, especially for a tonal work. Paradoxically, I experience the form of this movement entirely based on articulation.

For some reason, the many varied articulations of this movement, especially in the melodic lines, stand out immensely to me. Since almost no articulation is written in the score, it is left up to the performers and conductor, their knowledge of historical and stylistic performance practice, and their own interpretive decisions. The two recordings I listen to the majority of the time (the Pinnock and Belder editions) both treat the articulation the same. This has further solidified my experience of this progression of articulations, so that I now think of it as part of the piece, even though it is not indicated in the score and other groups may perform it differently.

I experience five different articulations as shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1.** Articulations experienced in Op. 6/8, V. Allegro.

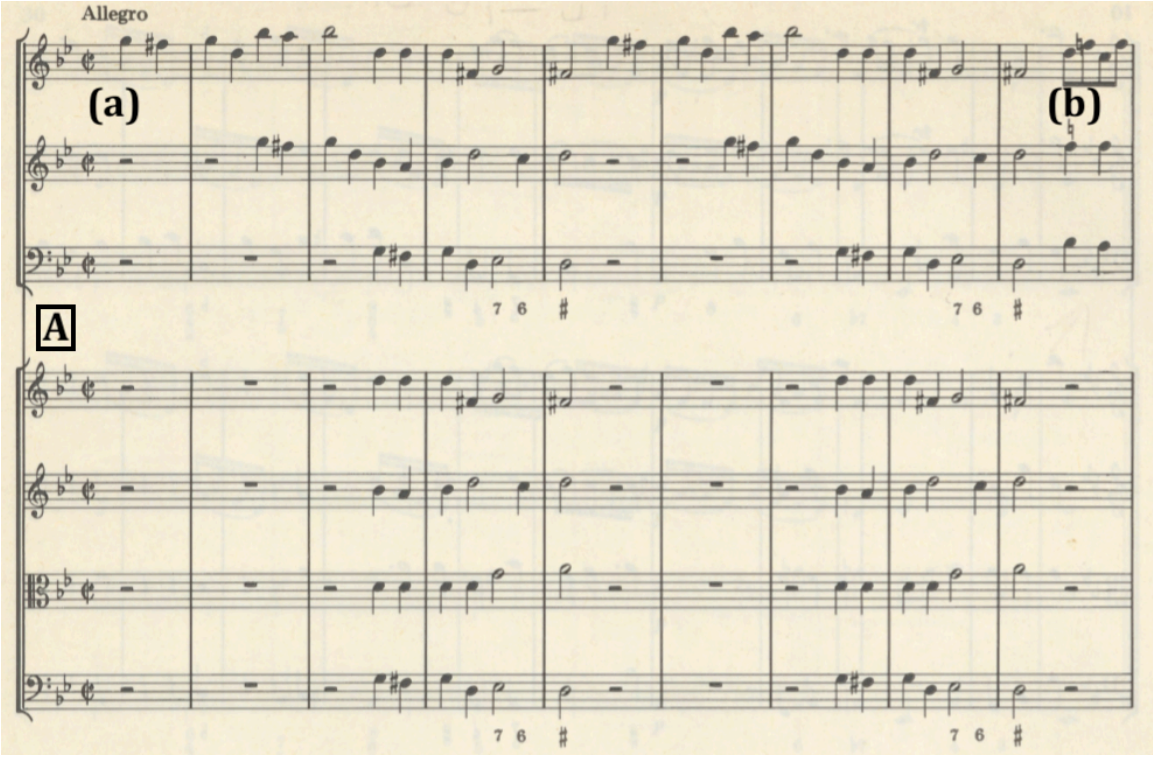
| Label | Measures | Articulation | Accents in Melody |
|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | 1–8, 46–50 | Detached | Equal quarter notes |
| (b) | 8–16 | Jagged | Equal eighth notes |
| (c) | 16–35 | Moderately smooth | Downbeats |
| (d) | 36–46, 50–54 | Very smooth | Deemphasized |
| (e) | 54–68 | Almost attached | Equal half notes |

The table highlights some interesting facts regarding my experience. First, I experience the form as essentially through-composed (but with repeats), with a small insertion of (a) in the middle of the (d) section. This second (a) mirrors the beginning of the movement, when I first experienced it. However, it is not long enough to initiate a full return to the beginning, especially since it is surrounded by (d).

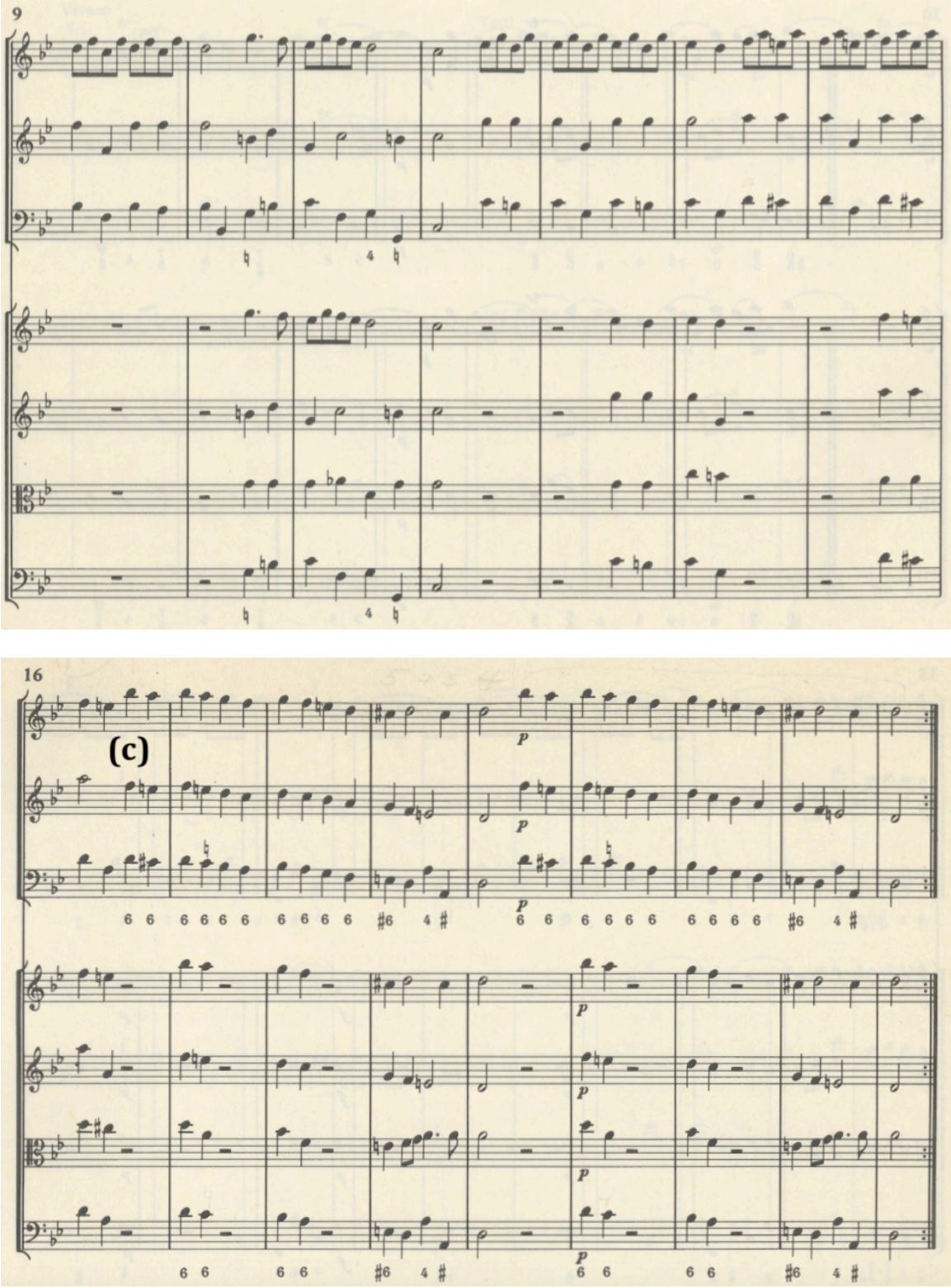
Second, the sections I hear are differentiated not only by articulation of notes but also by a pattern of accents. In section (a), for example, not only is each quarter note detached, but it is also accented with relatively equal strength to every other quarter note. At some points, the rhythm seems to affect the way the accents occur somewhat, but this is not a consistent enough correlation in my experience to include it in my analysis. However, I acknowledge that another listener could place great experiential emphasis on the rhythm of this movement, especially depending on how the experience was mediated.

Finally, some experienced sections contradict traditional formal sections. If I were going to do a traditional formal analysis on this movement, I would segment the form based on cadences, harmonic motion, and themes. Some of these line up with my experiential analysis, which is logical. When themes and keys change, what we would call the "character" of a piece often also changes. Articulation is one factor that can determine what creates the character of a formal section. However, they do not always go hand in hand. In a traditional analysis, I would broadly divide this movement of the concerto into three

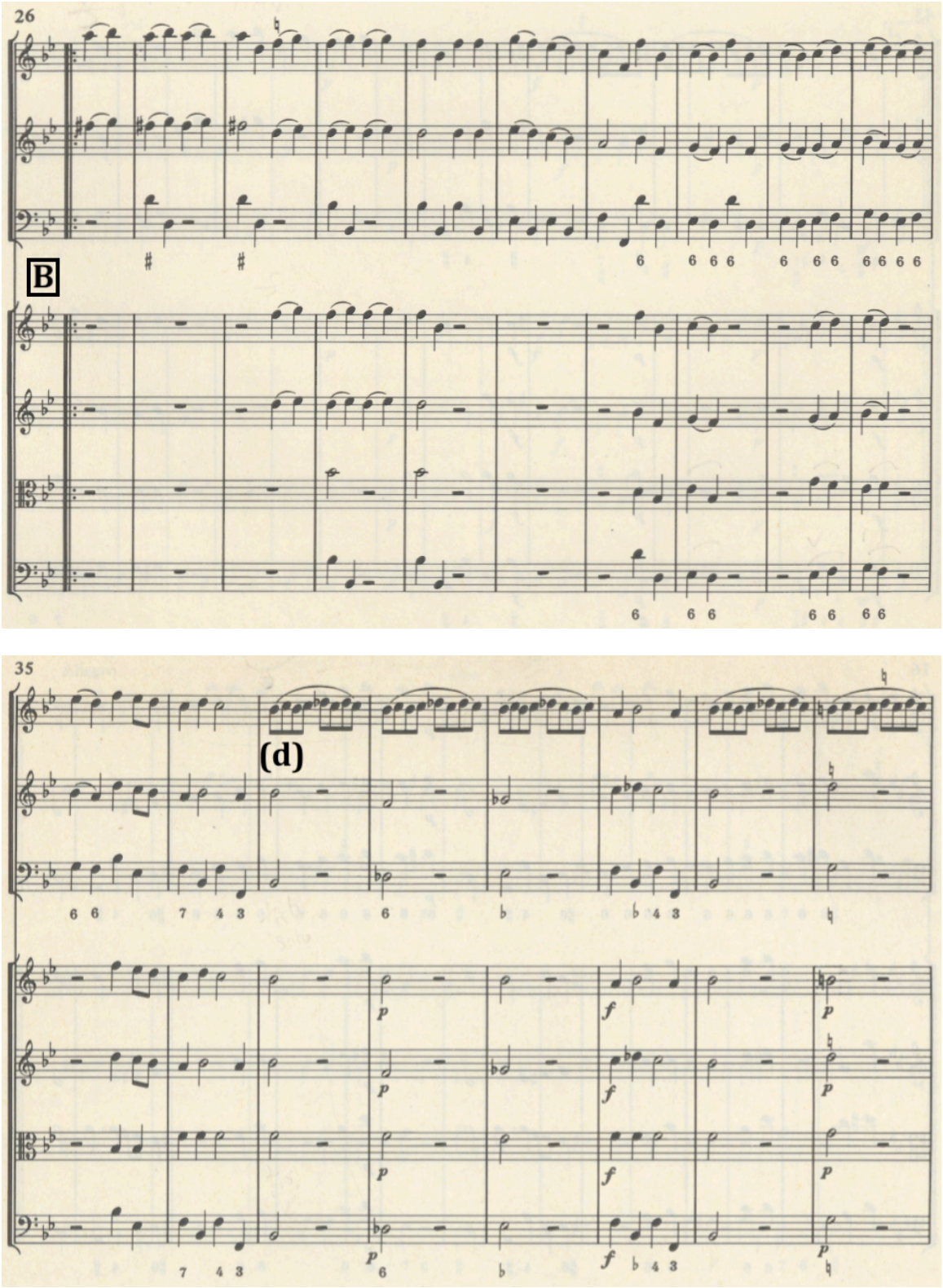
main sections because of thematic material (ABA'), and further segment each section into harmonically-based phrases, demarcated by cadences. In contrast, my experiential analysis does not concern itself with themes, harmonies, and cadences, other than when they happen to match with a certain articulation. Perhaps the most striking example of this is how the continuation of section (c) obscures the obvious formal boundary created by the repeat sign, among other more subtle factors. But because the articulation is the same, I do not experience such an obvious boundary here. Although I hear the change in melody, and I cognitively understand that this is a boundary of some sort when hearing the movement performed with repeats, my experience of the articulation still prevails over these factors. Example 5.1 shows the score of the fifth movement annotated with traditional sections, cadence locations, and experienced articulations based on the comparison I have explained here.



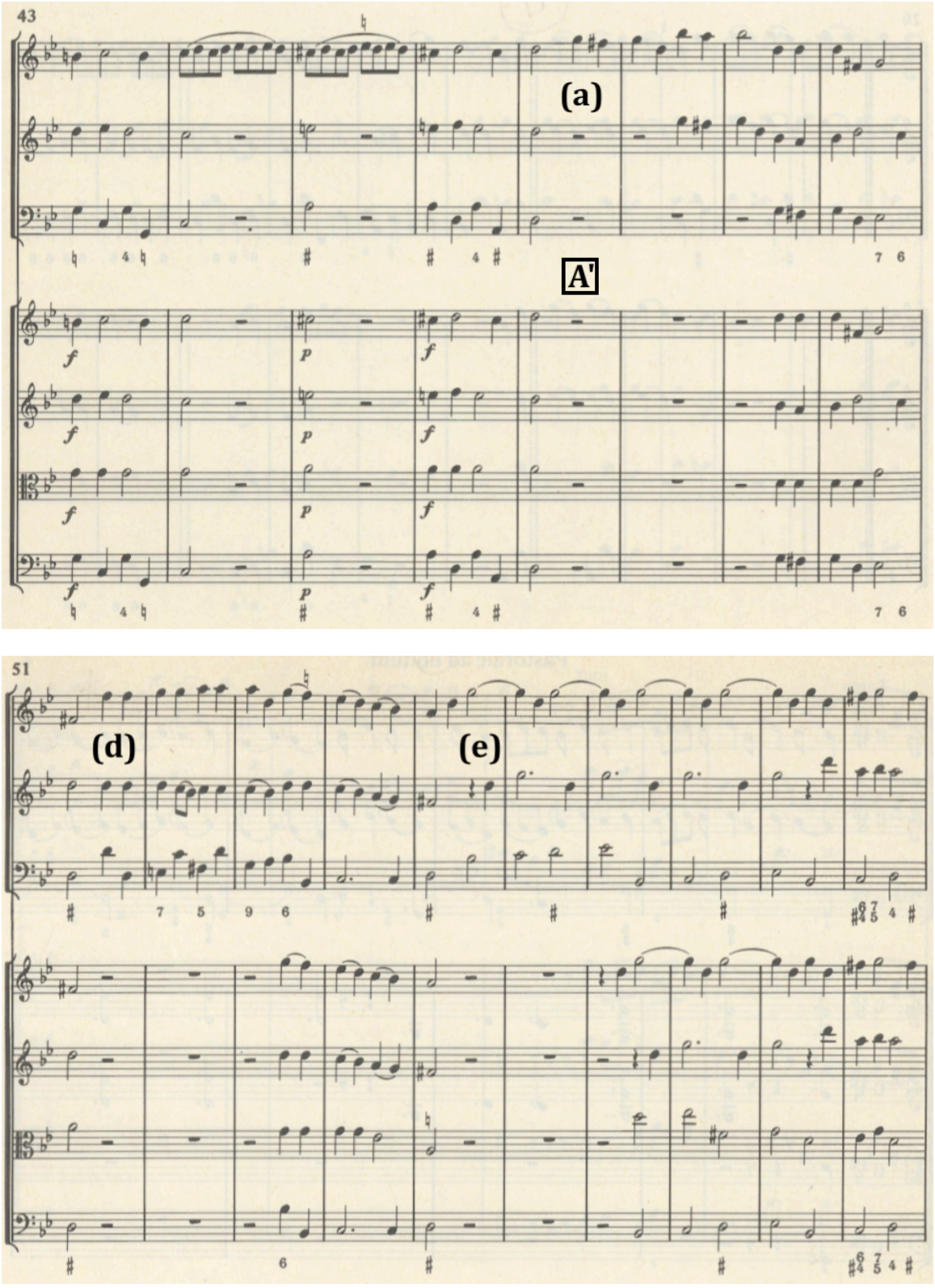

**Example 5.1.** Op. 6/8, V. Allegro, annotated.



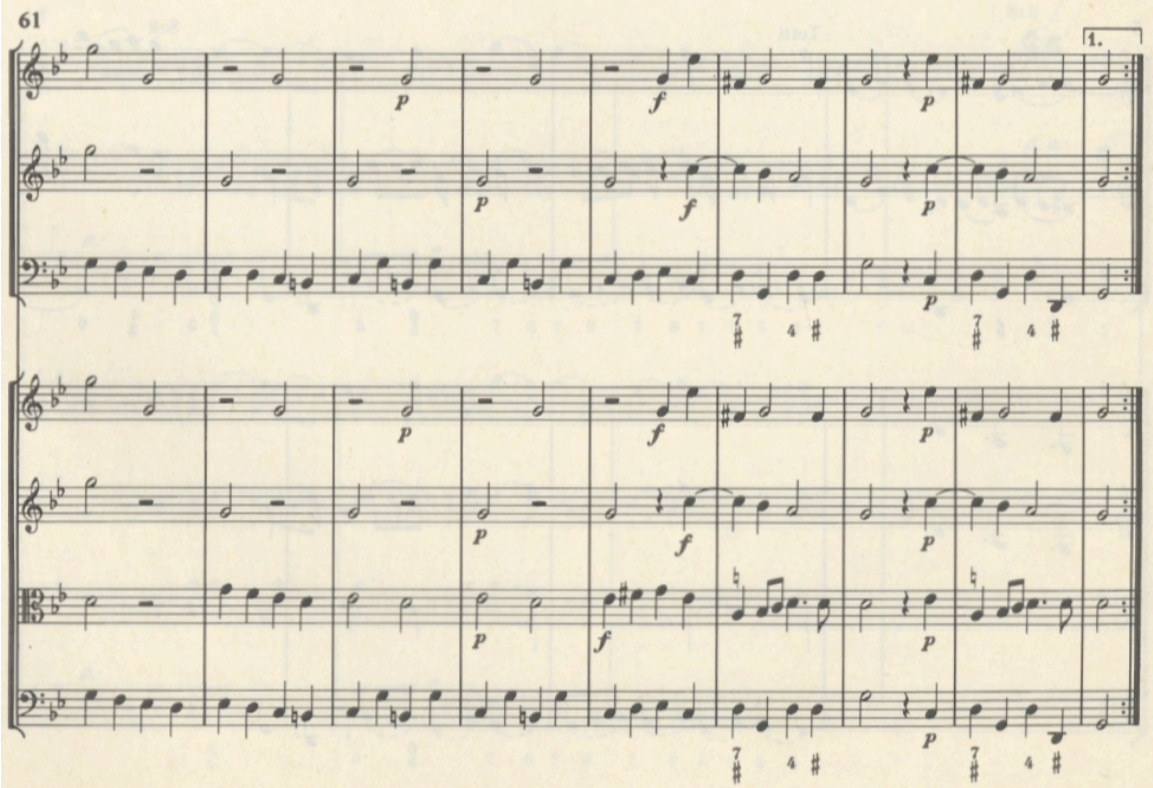

**Example 5.1**, continued.




**Example 5.1**, continued.




**Example 5.1**, continued.




**Example 5.1**, continued.

My experience of the form would make less sense were it not mediated by an understanding of traditional formal structure. First, even possessing the language to call it a formal analysis is likely unique to classically trained musicians. Second, a comparison with traditional formal analysis would not be possible without the mediation of my ability to perform such an analysis. My experience is less of a stand-alone formal one and more of a comparison between how I would have explained the form based on traditional methods and how I am actually experiencing it based on how the articulation affects me. It is especially important to recognize that experiential and traditional modes of analysis can influence each other in advantageous ways.

Other factors mediated my experience of this movement besides my traditional formal education. Whether I explicitly move or not, I often feel the potential for certain motions within my body. These potential or actual motions change with the changes in articulation. In more marked passages, such as (a),

I tap my foot to the beat. In smoother, more legato sections such as (d), I gradually sway my body back and forth. Similarly, I sing along at times. Since there are no words to enunciate, I change the syllable I sing when the articulation changes. In the first section (a), my syllable is similar to "dudt dudt." For (b), it changes to "taka taka." During (c) and (d), my syllables are attached in such a way that they run one into the next, and all consonants become soft and deemphasized. It was only after I analyzed my experience that I realized I had been mediating my experience of the articulation changes in the way I was mimicking them in my singing. I had not done it on purpose, but it helped me experience the articulation more intimately.

Music theorists tend to think that only certain musical features indicate formal sections, such as keys and themes. However, this analysis of my experience with the fifth movement of op. 6/8 suggests that listeners do not necessarily experience form in the same ways that we write about. This fact might not make a difference in how we recognize formal structure in a piece, but it can make a difference in how we analyze it. Perhaps we should broaden our consideration of musical factors when making decisions about formal designations. This could be especially useful in cases where formal sections are less straightforward. Experiential analysis could potentially help us make sense of form when traditional analysis seems to fall short.

I do not think that I am suggesting anything radical here; in fact, I believe most analysts do take "how we hear things" into account, especially in situations where an analytical interpretation is ambiguous. But analysis still generally tends to be from one viewpoint. In ambiguous situations, multiple experiential analyses could result in different interpretations, depending on whose experiences were analyzed. Thinking about how others experience a piece, which we may not be able to do without these analytical perspectives, deepens our understanding and appreciation of its richness and depth. In my opinion, ambiguity is one of the most enriching results of an analytical approach, as it opens up room for discussion and consideration of other approaches. Since music is dynamic, it can be hard to pin down. Ambiguity in formal boundaries, interpreted in several ways, suggests that musical form may be less strict than we tend to project.

### 5.2.6 VI. Pastorale ad libitum: Largo

The most salient part of the final movement to me is what happens at the fermata rests midway through the movement. While mediating my current experience through my past experiences and expectations, I simultaneously love and despise this moment; one part of me is satisfied by what happens, and another part is thrown off every time. The Pinnock and Belder recordings deal with this spot differently. The differences between the recordings affect the part of me that is satisfied by that moment; the Pinnock recording brings me more delight than the Belder. However, the part of me that does not like this spot does not change between the recordings, because the aspect of the moment that throws me off is equally present in both.

The rests slow down the harmonic rhythm at the end of a section. They follow both a predominant chord and its plagal resolution to introduce the cadence. In general, I enjoy this effect. In the Belder performance, those rests cause two complete breaks in the sound. I experience this pleasantly. However, the Pinnock recording features a single violin improvising a line over each rest that still slows the harmonic motion and provides a rhythmically free break, while smoothly connecting the melodic line. I like this much better, to the point that I especially look forward to this moment when listening to the Pinnock recording.

Right after the fermatas, the movement resumes its original tempo and continues on to a middle section. I dislike the way I experience this placement. Mediated through my experience with a great deal of common practice tonal music, it feels uncomfortable. The fermatas preceding a strong cadence sound like an ending gesture. The melodic ornamentation in the Pinnock performance reminds me of a small cadenza. I am ready for the movement, and the concerto, to conclude at this point. But there is still over half of the movement left. When the first section returns at the end, it does not end with fermatas or rests in this way the second time. I do not have a problem with my experience of the end of the movement; I feel that it concludes in a satisfactory way. But I cannot shake the feeling that there is a strong ending gesture in the middle of this movement.

If I were to analyze the piece rather than my experience, I would probably mostly miss this. I would notice the fermatas and the rests, but I would not focus my analysis on this moment. In addition, because the melodic ornamentation at this point is improvised, I could only notice it by listening to that specific recording, since it is not indicated on the score.

### 5.3 Concluding Thoughts on Experiential Analysis

The preceding analyses of just a few of my experiences have brought out new insights about this music in a way that traditional analysis cannot. In fact, by analyzing my own experience, I learned more about these pieces than I even understood through the experience in question. Although somewhat unrefined, putting my experience into words and examining the types of mediation that caused certain affordances was a worthwhile exercise that resulted in a deeper understanding and appreciation of op. 3 and op. 6/8. Especially illuminating is how some of my experiential analyses specifically enhance traditional analyses. New modes of analysis give us a richer awareness of the potential of these pieces and, indeed, of all music. When we analyze experience, we begin to understand why music affects us and how we contribute to this every time we listen.

There is something to be said for personal enrichment, both as an analyst and as a listener. Analyzing our own listening experiences as analysts can deepen our understanding of music. Even though I have studied Corelli's works for years, listening and analyzing and reflecting on my own experiences, I did not grasp op. 3 and the Christmas Concerto as fully until writing up analyses of my experiences and processing the consequences of what I thought and felt while listening. Now I have a new appreciation and awe of this music, and each subsequent listening experience will be mediated through this perspective I have gained.

Enhancing our traditional modes of analysis with analysis of experience can have far-reaching implications. First, traditional analysis is not able to examine all aspects of music equally effectively. I have already mentioned that experiential analysis provides interpretations that are much more listening-informed, that get closer to what it is like to listen. Analysis of experience also easily allows for multiple

readings of a piece, which traditional analysis generally does not. Analysts constantly grapple with how to analyze emotion in music. Many ideas of how to best do this have been presented, from philosophical musings to categorization of musical gestures to empirical studies of skin conductance, but none seem to quite encompass the breadth of the issue of emotion in music. Analysis of experience could be an important step forward to explaining the connection between emotion and music, especially since it focuses so heavily on the contributions of listeners.

One issue that is particularly difficult to deal with using only traditional analysis is the flow of musical time. Examination of a score is, in many ways, a static activity. An analysis of experience, on the other hand, places the passage of time front and center. As listeners' perception of music shifts and fluctuates with each proceeding moment, experiential analysis follows their thoughts and feelings, tracking their actions and reactions to musical affordances.

Second, experiential analysis can inform other musicians in ways that traditional analysis cannot. Performers, conductors, and chamber music coaches can use analysis of experience to guide their performance decisions. They can consider more ways that their interpretations of pieces might affect their audiences. For example, my analysis of op. 6/8, V. Allegro, could help a chamber group decide on articulation placement, depending on whether they want to emphasize traditional formal boundaries or obscure them. Without this analysis, performers may not consider articulation to be an indicator of form; but with it, they have more interpretive options available to evoke certain experiences in listeners. Experiential analyses can similarly give composers ideas about how to use musical elements in their pieces to elicit or express certain emotions.

Third, this type of analysis can inform pedagogy. In music theory classrooms, we tend to emphasize certain aspects of pieces. Many university curricula take a harmonically-biased approach. Experiential analysis reminds us that there are so many more layers to a piece than harmony. In many listening situations, harmony takes a backseat. To teach students to focus primarily on harmony in all situations, when their experiences do not agree, is counterintuitive. Of course, the study of harmony is incredibly important, but the analyses in this document demonstrate that other topics including motives,

schemas, melodic construction, imitation, instrumentation, stylistic performance, dance types, timbre, hypermeter, articulation, and embodiment can illuminate some analyses just as much as harmonic considerations. Additionally, music theory courses traditionally focus only on aspects of *pieces*, such as the topics I just mentioned. But since so much about music is affected by listeners and listening situations, I believe it is imperative that we also teach our students about this aspect of musical actualization. A broader, more experiential approach to the music theory curriculum will help our students be more sensitive performers, creative composers, and open-minded educators.

Mediation seems to be an especially pertinent aspect of experience for students. While teaching students the value in all listening experiences, we should also explain how some ways of listening are more appropriate in certain circumstances than others. Depending on what they need or what they are trying to accomplish, mediating their experiences in specific ways can help them, because they will be afforded different potentials in different situations. Aural skills courses, among others, attempt to help students mediate their listening in ways that will afford them better performing, conducting, composing, teaching, collaborating, and communicating. Perhaps these courses would be even more effective if we explained affordances and mediation to our students. Instead of making them think there is a "right" way to hear something, we can emphasize listening in "situationally appropriate" ways. Many students are discouraged by the difficulty of aural skills courses, and they struggle to understand how the courses are applicable to their musical lives. It might help their mindset to know that there is nothing inherently unacceptable about how they already listen; however, if they wish to be as successful as possible as musicians, they will need to be able to mediate their experiences in the ways presented in these courses.

Finally, analysis of experience conveys that there is no such thing as "ideal listening" or an "ideal listener." By acknowledging multiple ways of hearing pieces, as well as multiple modes of analyzing them, we are expanding our notions about music. Experiential analysis encourages us to consider more interpretive factors than we currently might. By accepting the possibility of more than one "good" way of listening—indeed, by affirming that all ways can be insightful—we become more open-minded to

different perspectives. As our field seeks to always be more inclusive and unbiased, a mode of analysis that requires us to do just that seems especially appropriate.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This document has asserted several philosophical principles. First, listeners are a necessary part of the musical process. They affect their own experiences with music. Second, no listener or listening is objectively better than another. Since all listening experiences have value, they are worth our examination as music theorists. Third, music is only actualized through an interaction between piece and listener; both must play an active role in order to transform sound into music. Because of this, music is musical experience. By framing my analyses with musical affordances and mediation, I have shown how these principles can permeate analysis and illuminate new ways of thinking about music.

Throughout this document, I have applied my ideas to works by Corelli, but I believe they work just as well on other styles of music. To conclude my arguments, I will briefly demonstrate how experiential analysis can inform our interpretation of a piece by a different composer. I have chosen the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's sonata no. 5 for piano and violin, op. 24, "Spring Sonata." This is one of his most popular violin sonatas, and it is frequently performed, studied, and analyzed. I will show how analysis of my experience with this movement can inform a traditional sonata-form analytical approach to it.[1] In so doing, I will explain how my own analytical perspective of this piece has been enhanced and enriched through this exercise.

I experience the first movement of Beethoven's Spring Sonata as an alternation between passages of stability (St) and transition (T). (St) passages sound steadfast and afford me a sense of control. I expect their melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and emotional qualities to remain basically the same. On the other hand, (T) passages afford me a sense of change or movement to something different. I expect them to eventually lead into an (St) passage.

I carefully choose the word "passage" to refer to these sections, because they do not always coincide with a phrase, period, or other traditional formal designation. Rather, "passage" in this account is

[1] Most of the terms, labels, and abbreviations I use to represent my traditional analysis are taken from James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), xxv–xxviii.

a completely experiential designation. A passage begins when I first experience the (St) or (T) quality, and ends when a different passage emerges. Sometimes they align with traditional formal boundaries, but sometimes they do not. Similarly, I do not experience all moments of stability and transition as they pass by. Some of them, such as a dominant seventh chord resolving to a tonic triad, are too close to the surface for me to consider them a passage. Not every note or chord that occurs affects me enough to label it as a new formal section.

Nearly all music can be said to alternate between periods of stability and instability. Especially in a form like sonata form, some formal sections are commonly considered more stable than others. Generally, P, S, and C zones are considered stable. TR zones are transitional, obviously, and developments are less stable in general than expositions and recapitulations. How these sections play out in specific pieces may vary, but these general principles tend to hold.

While some sections of sonata form can usually be easily heard even by listeners who do not understand the form (such as a new theme at S or the return of P in the recapitulation), others can be difficult to identify without a score and may not be aurally or experientially significant to many listeners. The difference between this phenomenon and what I assert here is that my experiential analysis is salient in terms of passages that are significant specifically to my listening experience. The sections I identify as (St) and (T) are those that I hear as performing contrasting functions throughout the movement. Other listeners could conduct similar analyses of their own experiences and expose drastically different affordances and outcomes. They may not hear the movement in terms of stability and transition at all. And if they did, they would likely hear the passages beginning and ending at different points. I have chosen to analyze the Spring Sonata in these (St) and (T) segments simply because this is how I experience it.

There are certain aspects of myself as a listener that mediate my experience. I have performed the piano part of this piece a number of times, and I know this movement well. However, I have never officially analyzed it or studied it in an academic way before now. Even as a performer, I did not analyze the form, modulations, themes, or harmonies closely, although I probably should have. Even so, I still

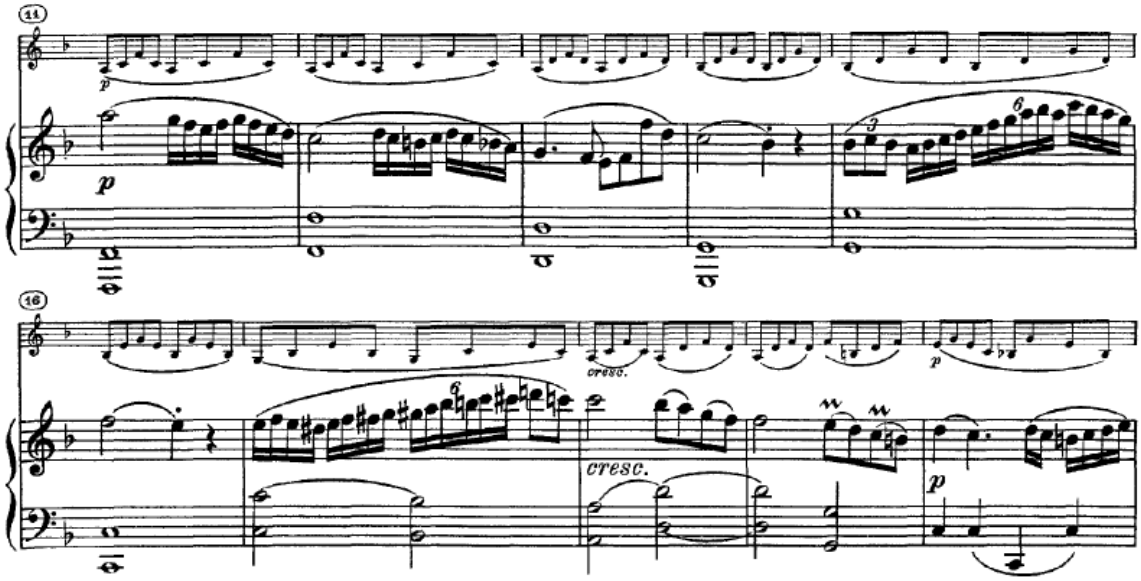
mediate the Spring Sonata through my knowledge that it is in sonata form. My understanding of sonata form and specific training in hearing and identifying various formal sections and functions further mediate my experience, even when I am not trying to listen for aspects of sonata form. But because I have learned to focus my attention in specific ways in particular situations, I am able to intentionally set that aside and examine an experience mostly free from external assumptions about the form.

Since I first approached this piece as a performer many years ago, I am quite familiar with the score; but in creating this analysis, I forced myself to listen without it.[2] I always listen differently and therefore experience music differently when mediating with a score. My attention is divided and my expectations altered because of what I see in front of me. Mediated in this way, the piece affords me different actions and reactions, because of how my environment has changed, as well as aspects of myself as a listener. I found this to be especially true with this specific work. After listening a number of times without a score to solidify my experience of (St) and (T), I began listening with the score in order to mark places where my experience changed. It was actually rather difficult to continue focusing on the experience I had previously undergone. I had to intentionally focus intently on my memory of my previous listenings in order to correctly label the score.

The full score of this movement is provided in the Appendix. It is annotated to illustrate the comparison of my experiential (St) and (T) formal labels and the formal boundaries of traditional sonata theory, including significant keys, cadences, and thematic areas. In the analysis that follows here, I draw your attention to a few significant areas of special interest to show how my experiential analysis can augment a traditional analysis of the form. In some cases, my experience "agrees" with traditional formal boundaries; in others, it challenges them in ways that help us identify what makes the Spring Sonata a unique and interesting exemplar of sonata form.

[2] I do not have a strong enough visual memory for my knowledge of the score from years ago to have mediated my experience in any significant way. If I had memorized the movement for performance, this would have mediated my experience much differently, as I would have a deeper memory and awareness not only of the score but also of the performing experience. However, I never have memorized any significant portion of it.

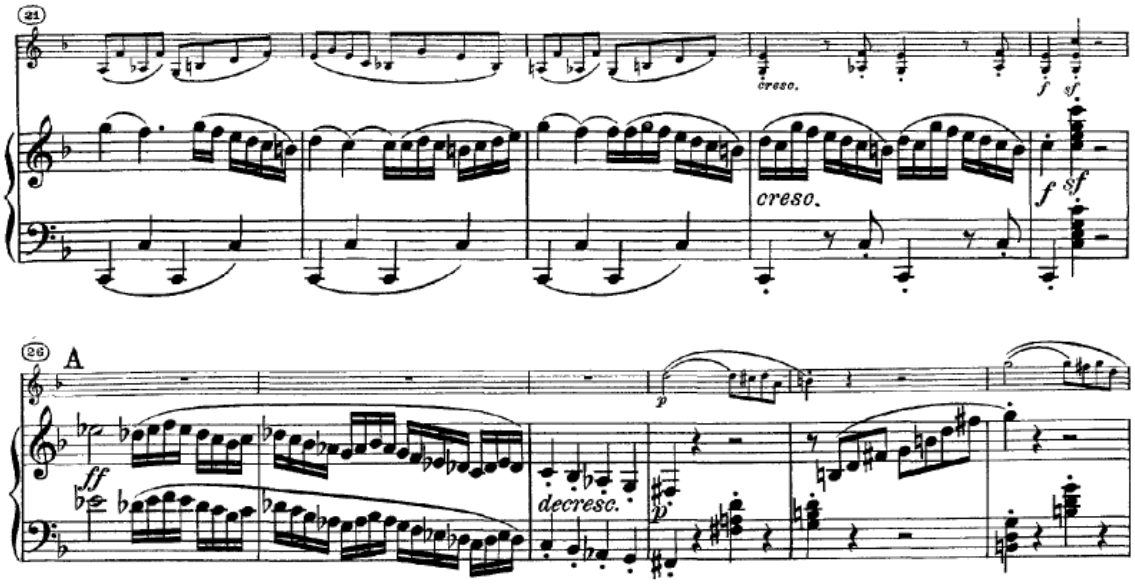
Analysts tend to agree that the beginning of TR sections of sonata form are usually recognized as such only in hindsight. The phrase usually begins with relatively stable material that seems to extend the P theme but then transforms into a transitional phrase that ends on a half cadence to set up the new key. My experience verifies this common TR construction in the Spring Sonata. TR technically begins at m. 11, but I do not experience (T) until m. 20 (Example 6.1).




**Example 6.1.** Beethoven, op. 24, I. Allegro, mm. 11–20.

In the recapitulation, when TR returns, it is constructed differently than in the exposition. In the exposition, TR begins with almost a complete restatement of the P theme, but it "transforms" into a transition at the evasion of the cadence. I experience (T) at this evasion. In the recapitulation, TR moves away from P material more quickly in the violin melody; the piano part indicates this even before the violin does with the A-flat. Because of this, I experience (T) sooner, in m. 137, only three measures after TR begins. Although the two TR sections match up fairly well between the exposition and the recapitulation, the different placements of (T) point to fundamental differences in how these TR areas work.

One of the most striking aspects of the traditional sonata form in this movement is the declined MC in m. 25 (Example 6.2).[3] Although TR comes to a strong half cadence, what follows is not the S theme nor the expected key. Instead, different TR material continues in m. 26, eventually leading into S in the key of the dominant at m. 38. In the recapitulation, the same events transpire. The MC in m. 149 is declined, followed by more TR material that is thematically comparable to that beginning in m. 26. The S theme returns in the recapitulation in the tonic key at m. 162.



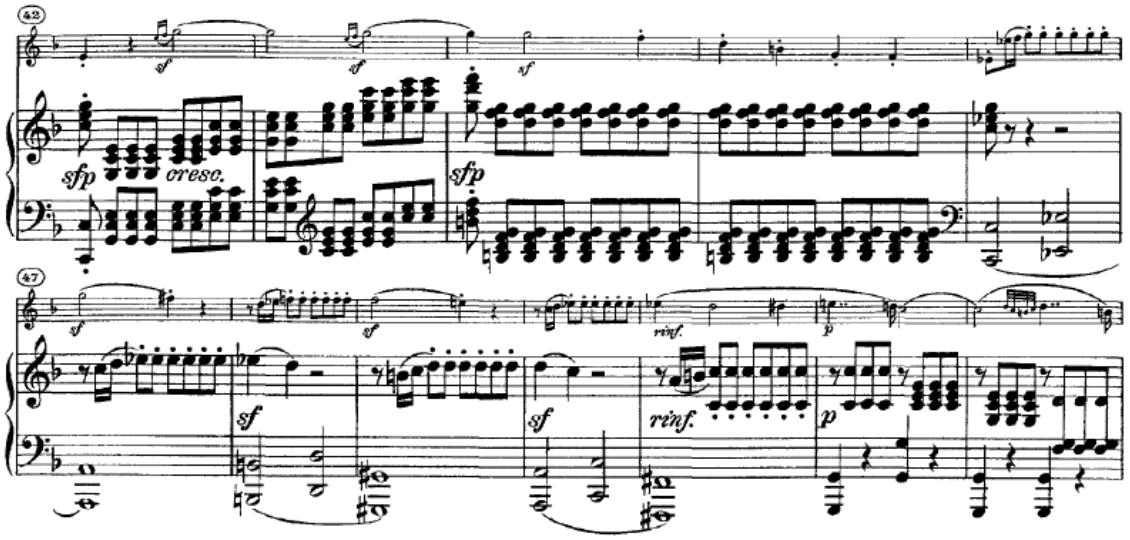

**Example 6.2.** Beethoven, op. 24, I. Allegro, mm. 21–31.

Conversely, my experiential analysis of the exposition completely glosses over this declination. Because I experience (T) starting at m. 20, and no (St) interrupts this sensation until S arrives at m. 38, I feel no declined MC or differentiation between the two parts of TR. In the recapitulation, my experience is slightly different. Intriguingly, I experience (St) at m. 153, in the middle of the second part of TR. I do not experience an (St) passage at the corresponding spot in the exposition. I believe the reason that this part of the recapitulation sounds more stable to me is that once I hear it in the exposition, I have come to

[3] Hepokoski and Darcy, 46.

expect it. I mediate my experience in the recapitulation through my recent memory of the exposition. The consonant triads and sequential passage that begin in m. 153 are stable enough on their own to maintain (St), and my fulfilled expectations at this spot are enough to set a new experienced passage in motion. At m. 157, when the lead-in to S begins, my experience is snapped back to (T). It is as if I suddenly remember that I am hearing (St) where no (St) was before.

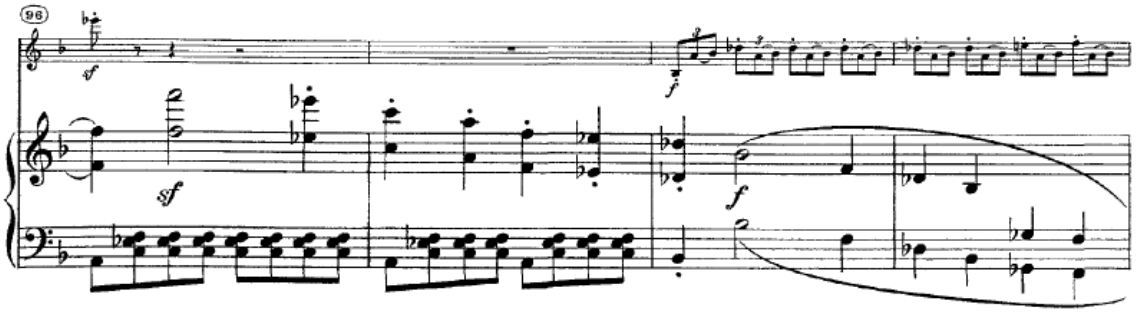
Although S and (St) align at m. 38, I experience another (T) section before the S theme is completed that is counterintuitive to traditional sonata form. The material at m. 46 sounds uncertain enough to mark the beginning of a (T) passage (Example 6.3). After a long, uncertain TR, C major has finally arrived with the S theme. Still, it has not yet been established with a strong cadence. The material leading up to m. 46 is cadential-sounding material; mediated through my implicit understanding of what cadences in Beethoven sound like, I expect a cadence to arrive at this point and solidify C major. Instead, a C minor triad undercuts the cadence and elides it with a sequential passage that eventually ends up back at C major for the EEC in m. 54. Only once the EEC is set up with a V in m. 52 do I hear a resolution back into an (St) passage. Interestingly, neither (T) nor (St) line up with phrase boundaries in this section. The (T) passage ends before a cadence, and the (St) passage begins before the C1 material does.




**Example 6.3.** Beethoven, op. 24, I. Allegro, mm. 42–53.

The minor inflection at m. 46 is especially salient to me in my experience of (T). However, not all minor inflections cause me to experience a (T) passage. In m. 77, the minor inflection does not interrupt the (St) passage, even though it is prominent in the texture, because the repeating C bass note has been established for seven measures before this point. Because of this, the recurring C still affords me stability despite the A-flat in the melody. In m. 94, the minor inflection does not change the (St) status, because I am not expecting a strong cadence at this point. Also, the context of the material surrounding m. 94 affords me stability. The exposition has finally ended after a series of themes and cadences in C major. My experience is mediated through my understanding that the passage is in the development section. Compared to the transitional nature of many developments, I hear this as relatively stable. The motives, rhythm, and underlying chord progression essentially match the phrase just heard in mm 90–94, the beginning of the (St) passage. Given these other contextual factors, the minor inflection alone is not enough to initiate (T).

Although traditional formal designations generally rely mainly on harmonic and thematic matters, some experiential passages occur for completely separate reasons. In the development in m. 98, a (T) passage begins (Example 6.4). I heard this as (T) on the downbeat of the measure, before any harmonic oddities take place. The entrance of the violin triplets is enough to evoke (T) in me despite other relatively stable musical factors. The driving rhythm here, which would be pushed into the background in a traditional discussion of form, begins a (T) passage that extends through the remainder of the development. In truth, rhythm is one of the most essential factors that affords me a transitional experience in the development. To disregard it due to its lack of thematic or tonal importance would be to miss what I regard as one of the defining features of the development. Although the development begins with (T) in m. 86, (T) only lasts for four measures before an (St) passage takes over. It is not until the (T) at m. 98 that this section actually feels developmental to me. To miss the importance of the rhythm here is to miss a main factor that differentiates this section from mm. 90–98.



**Example 6.4.** Beethoven, op. 24, I. Allegro, mm. 96–99.

There are a number of other salient moments in the movement where (St) and (T) passages either reinforce traditional sonata form, such as the alignment of (St) and the recapitulation at m. 124, or encroach on traditional formal boundaries, such as the retransition in m. 116 not being indicated in any way in my experiential analysis. However, I believe the short analysis I have provided here effectively demonstrates the way analysis of experience can be juxtaposed with traditional analysis of sonata form to enrich our understanding of the first movement of the Spring Sonata.

As a performer, I would use this dual analysis to try various interpretive decisions. I would perform differently those places where traditional analysis and experiential analysis are misaligned. If a new traditional formal section arrives, but an experienced passage does not change, I might focus on continuing the (St) or (T) character more than bringing out a new theme. Conversely, if I wanted to highlight the traditional interpretation of the form, I would carefully emphasize those traditional boundaries, especially at points where they do not line up with experiential ones, so as to try to encourage the listener to hear them more clearly.

As a listener, this juxtaposed analysis provides me with more ways to listen to the movement. I can focus my attention in different ways to make either approach more salient. This, in turn, could provide me with new experiences and a greater appreciation for Beethoven's style. I could listen to the remaining three movements of the sonata while identifying (St) and (T) passages to see if this lends any more insight into the work as a whole. Alternatively, I could listen to them with as few expectations as

possible and let my experiences with them inform new ways of approaching the piece. Perhaps I would end up experiencing each movement with a different focus. I could then, in turn, listen intentionally to the entire piece through each of the four focuses, gaining even more new analytical insights.

In addition, I am curious as to how other listeners would experience the first movement. I would especially be interested in an analysis of the experiences of someone who had never heard the piece before and someone who was unfamiliar with the boundaries of sonata form. It would be interesting to see how their experiences differ from mine. It might illuminate hidden biases that I have because of how I mediate my experience with this work. Also, I am especially interested to know how my violinist partner who performed this work with me years ago would experience it. Mediated by her role as a violinist, how would her experience differ from mine? An analysis of her experience compared to this one of mine could begin to uncover how different collaborative performers experience the music they perform. Insights from such a discovery could help performers collaborate more successfully.

Finally, as an analyst, I recognize that this analysis demonstrates several truths. First, traditional analyses are not and cannot always be heard. This does not diminish their importance, but it is essential that we make the distinction between analyses of pieces, analyses of experience, and analyses that intend to push readers toward a certain experience. Making statements such as "listeners are thrown by the declined MC" overgeneralizes an experience that not all listeners share. A change of language ("listeners may be thrown by the declined MC" or , simply, "the MC is declined") can go a long way in ensuring that our analyses do not alienate our readers or students. The analysis in this chapter proves that not every listener is thrown at this moment; and instead of this being a "wrong" way of hearing the work, the experiential analysis more closely follows the traditional formal structure of the movement, suggesting that the declined MC sounds less problematic to some listeners than the way it is presented with traditional analysis.

Second, listening without a score can evoke certain types of insightful experiences that would not be possible when mediated through a score. As analysts, we are often tempted to go right to the score when listening, but I feel it is essential for us to also incorporate plenty of listening without a score into

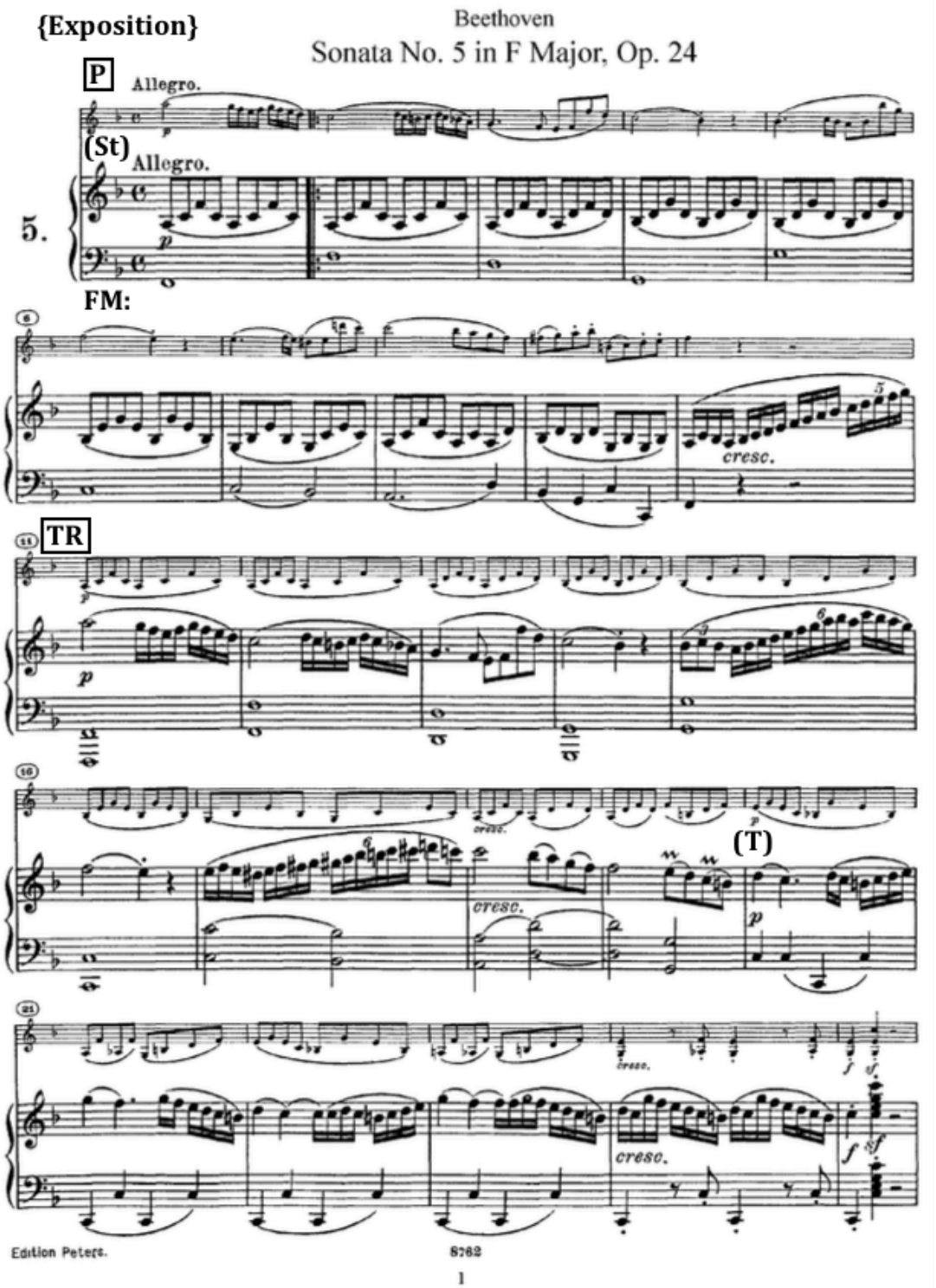
our analytical process. For me, what could be considered a somewhat problematic passage surrounding the declined MC was easier to figure out because I considered both the score and my non-score-mediated experience. Since the passage in mm. 26–37 still sounded transitional, it was not difficult to decide that the S theme is delayed until m. 38. Without this experience, I would have had a more difficult time figuring it out. At times, I also identified returning themes more quickly because I associated them with either (St) or (T) experiences.

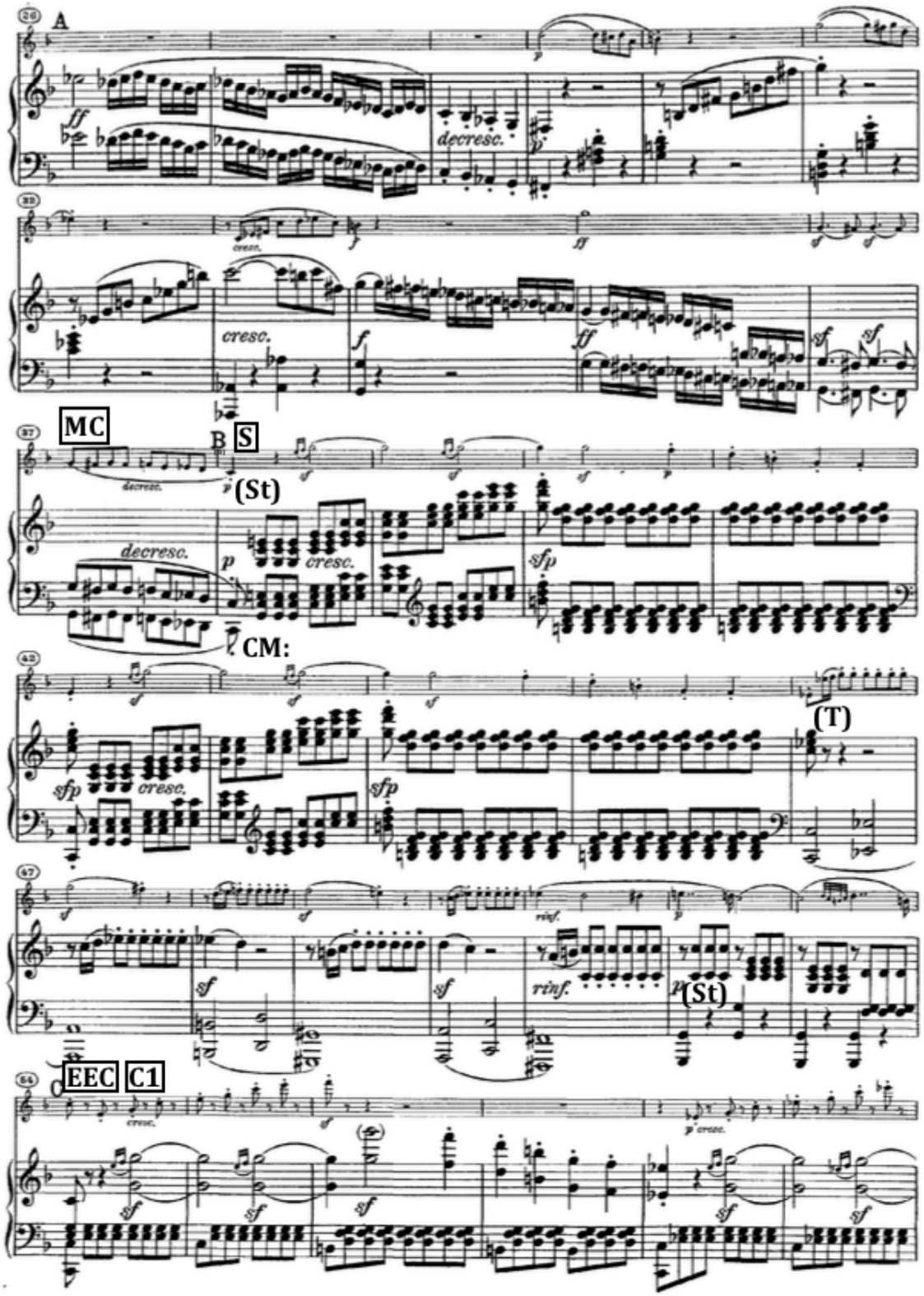
Third, all listening experiences are valid. Even though my experience was mediated through an analyst's and performer's point of view, through analyzing my experience, I realized that it did not seem very academic. Nevertheless, I did not judge myself—just as I would not judge others for their experiences, regardless of what they were. Through acceptance of my experience just as it was, I learned more about the Spring Sonata, Beethoven's compositional style, and myself as a listener. Not only can analysis of experience grant us a deeper understanding of pieces and composers, but it can also grant us a deeper appreciation for various listeners and their interpretations. I now know a little more about how I listen, which will inform the next listening situation I encounter. If I analyzed someone else's encounter, it would enrich my understanding of who that person is, what is important to them, and how they experience music. If we analyze our students' experiences, or teach them to do the same, we can more easily reach them. These analyses can provide insights into how students mediate their experiences, why they prefer some styles over others, and what theoretical concepts they might not yet grasp fully. We could use these insights as a conduit to discuss the value of a variety of experiences, as well as to guide our students through self-reflection. We could also use them as tools to help us better understand how to meet our students where they are in order to better teach them.

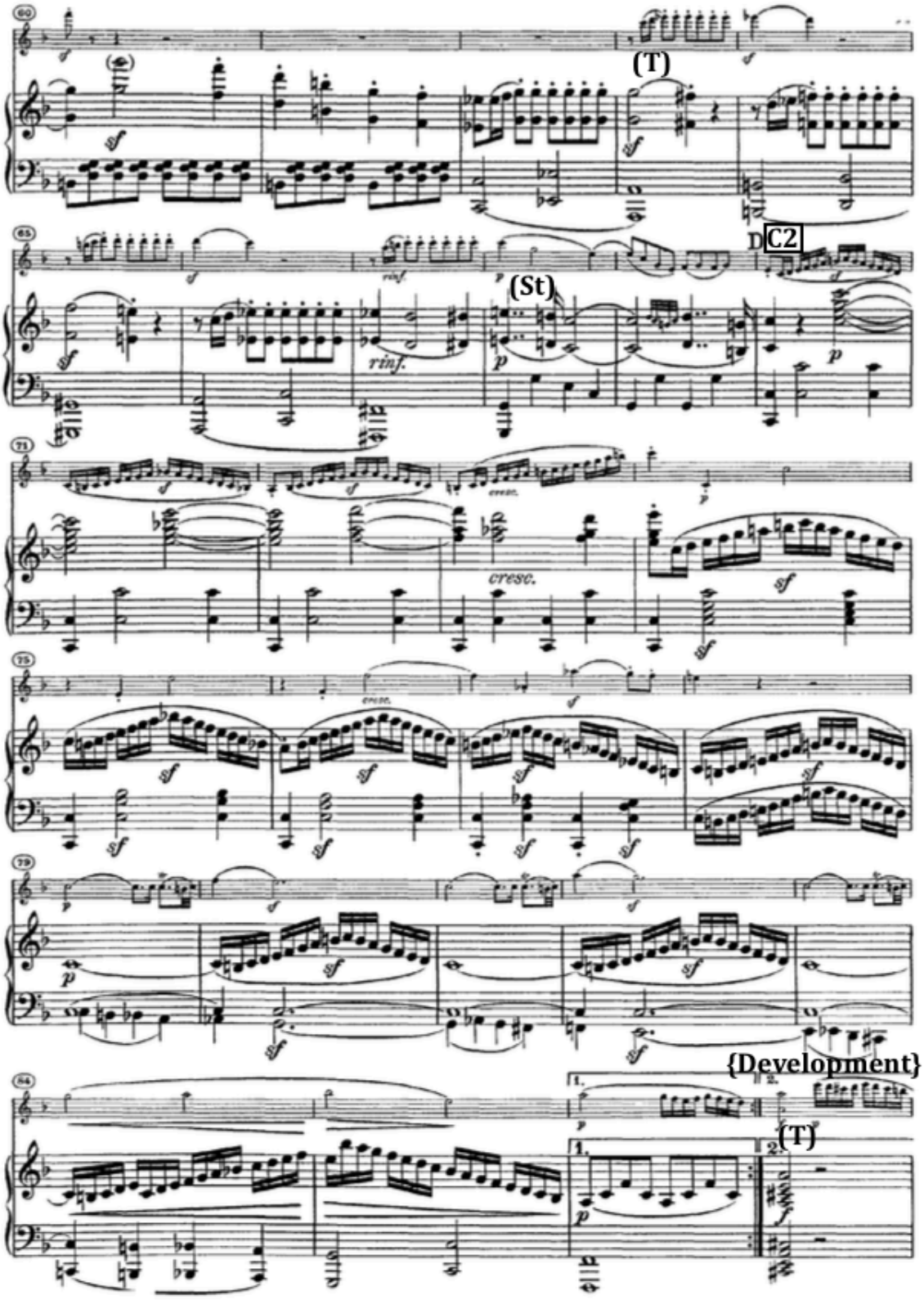
This analysis of the first movement of Beethoven's Spring Sonata shows that my approach in this document can be effectively extended to fit other styles and genres. It is my hope that this exploration of subjective accounts begins an important discussion about listening experiences, the value of non-conforming experiences, and the usefulness of their inclusion in analysis. By demonstrating how different types of mediation influence the affordances available to listeners, I have shown that listeners affect their

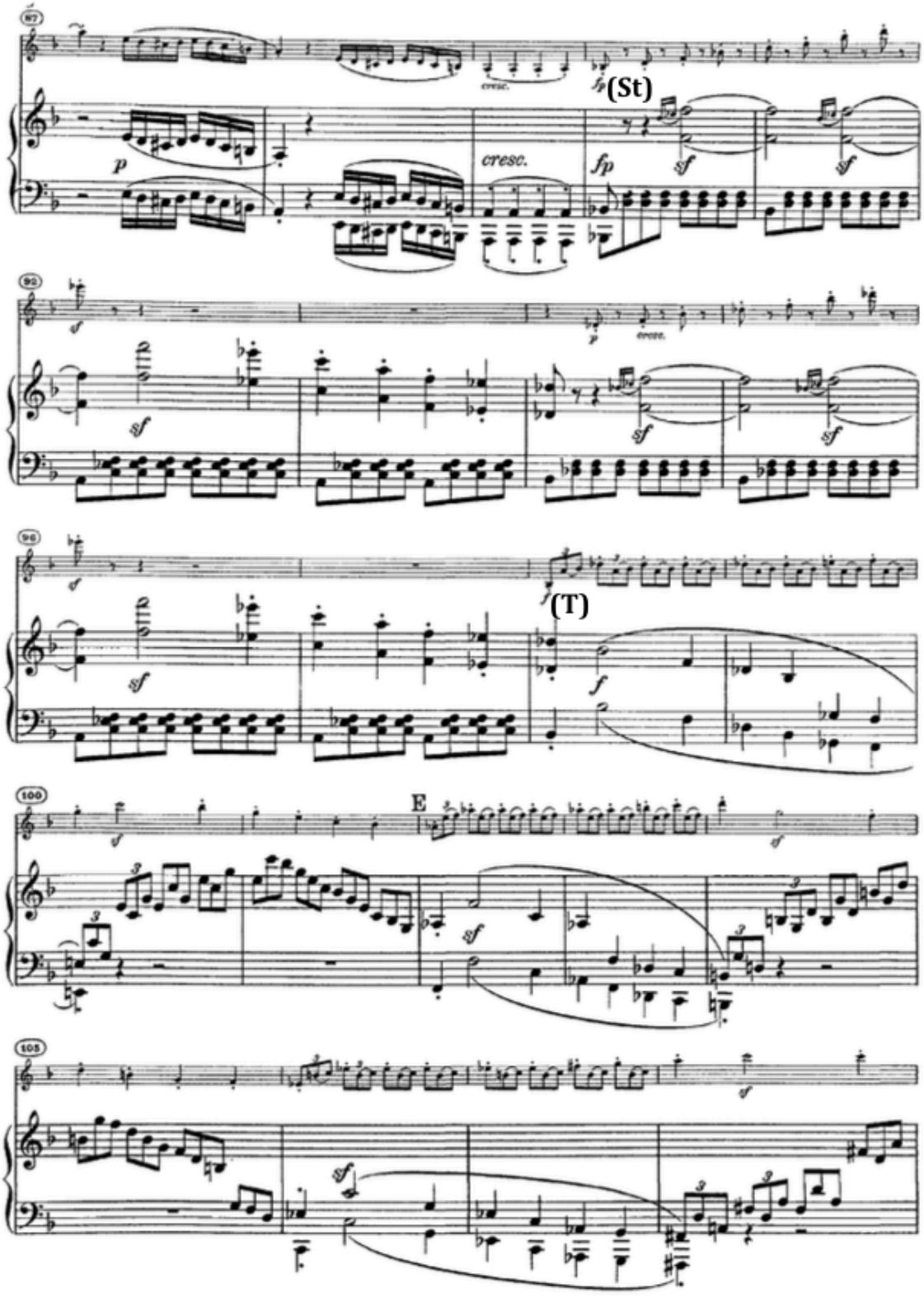
own musical experiences. Listeners play an essential, active role in the creation of music. As more analyses are performed on experiences, we will create diverse and inclusive readings of pieces that speak to the actual nature of listening.

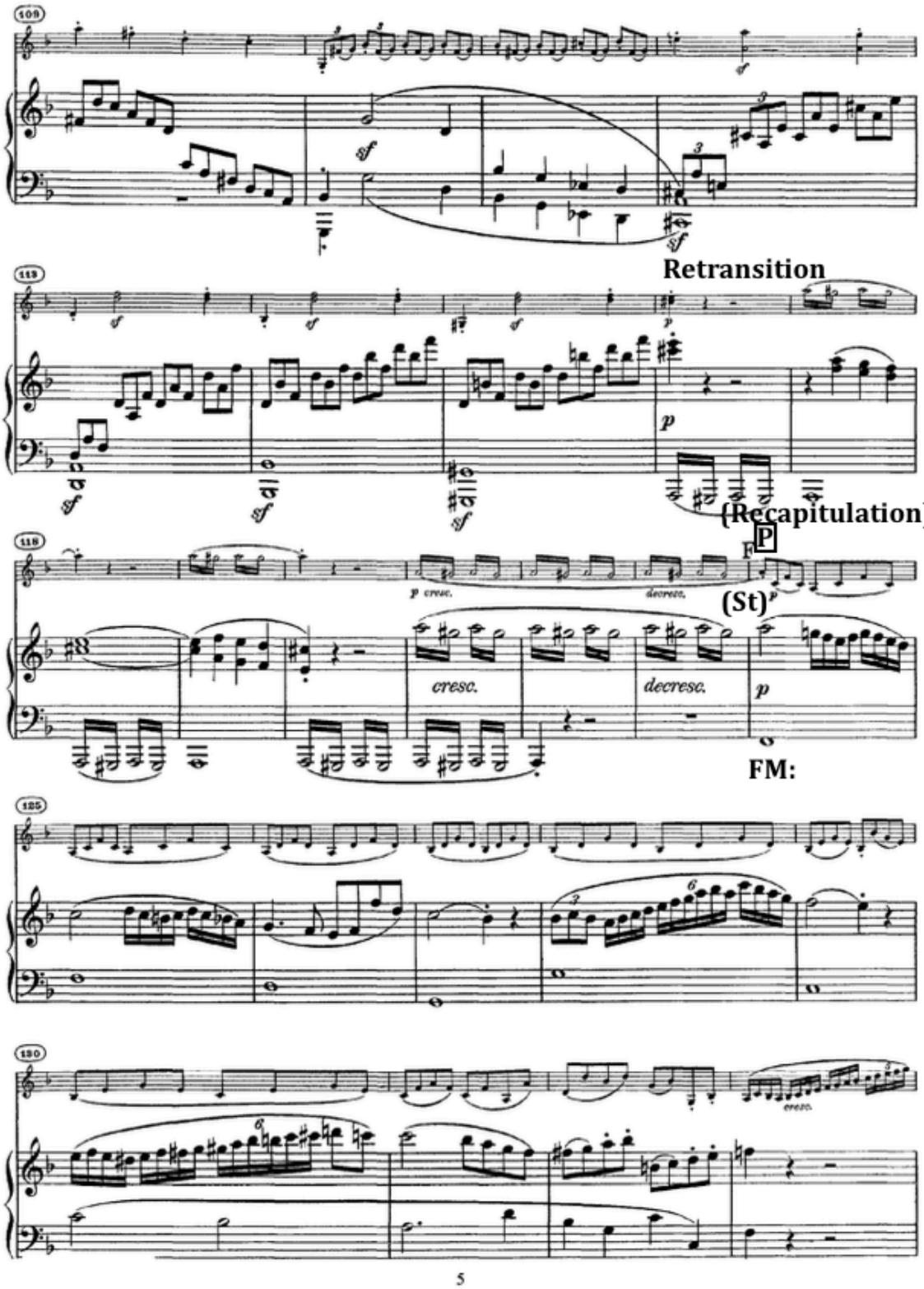
**Appendix: Annotated Spring Sonata Score**

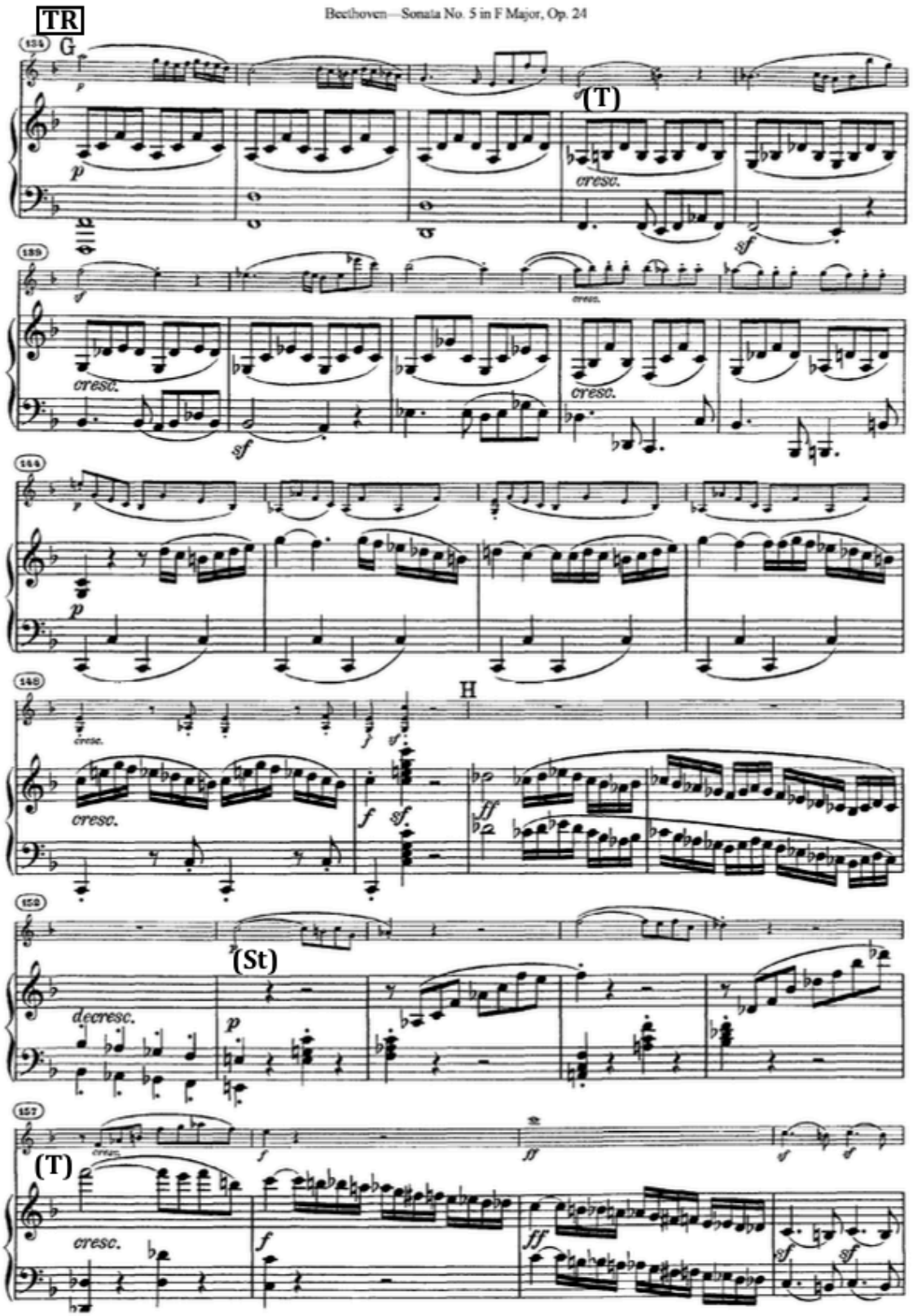


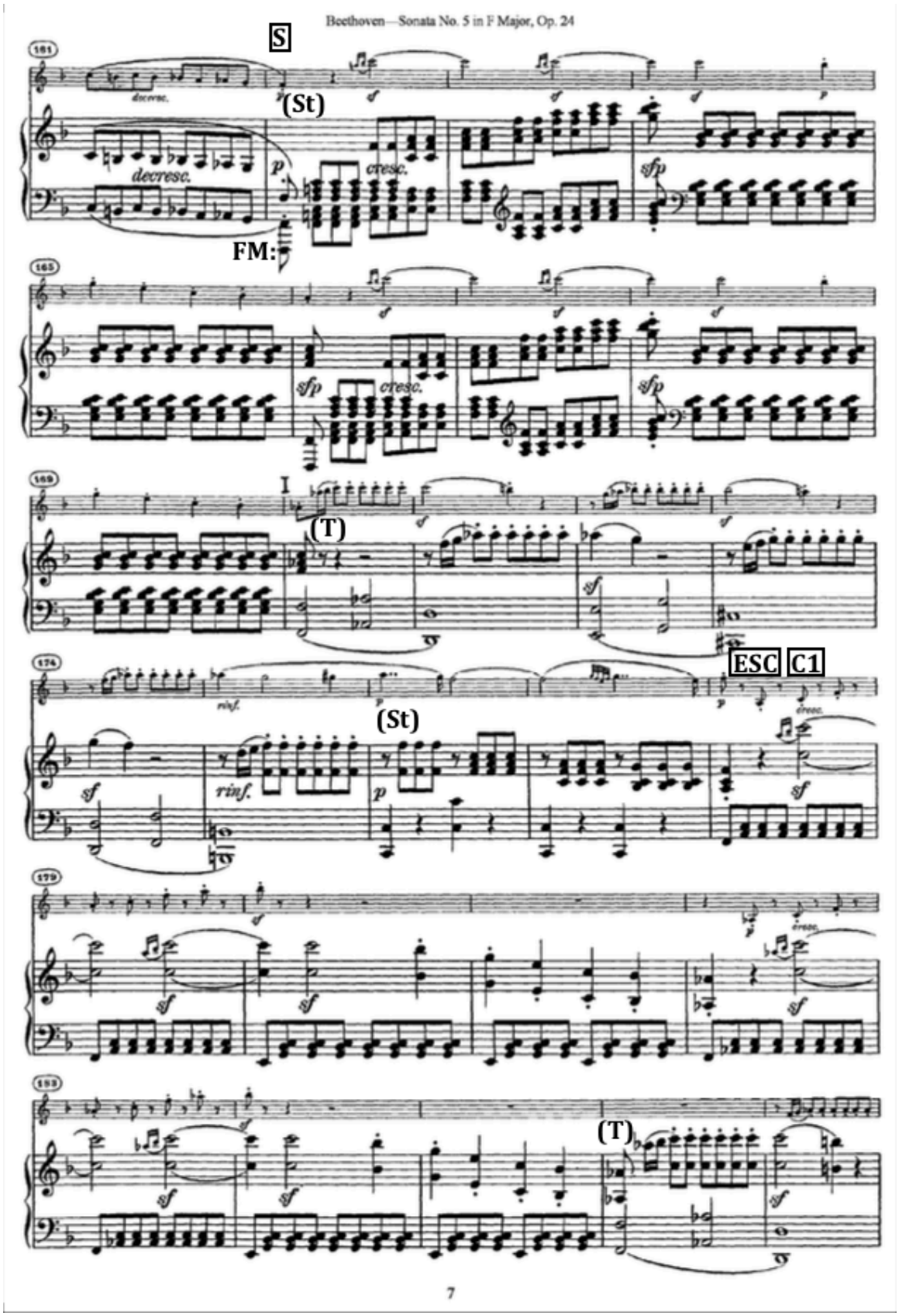

A
MC
B
S
(St)
CM:
(T)
(St)
EEC
C1

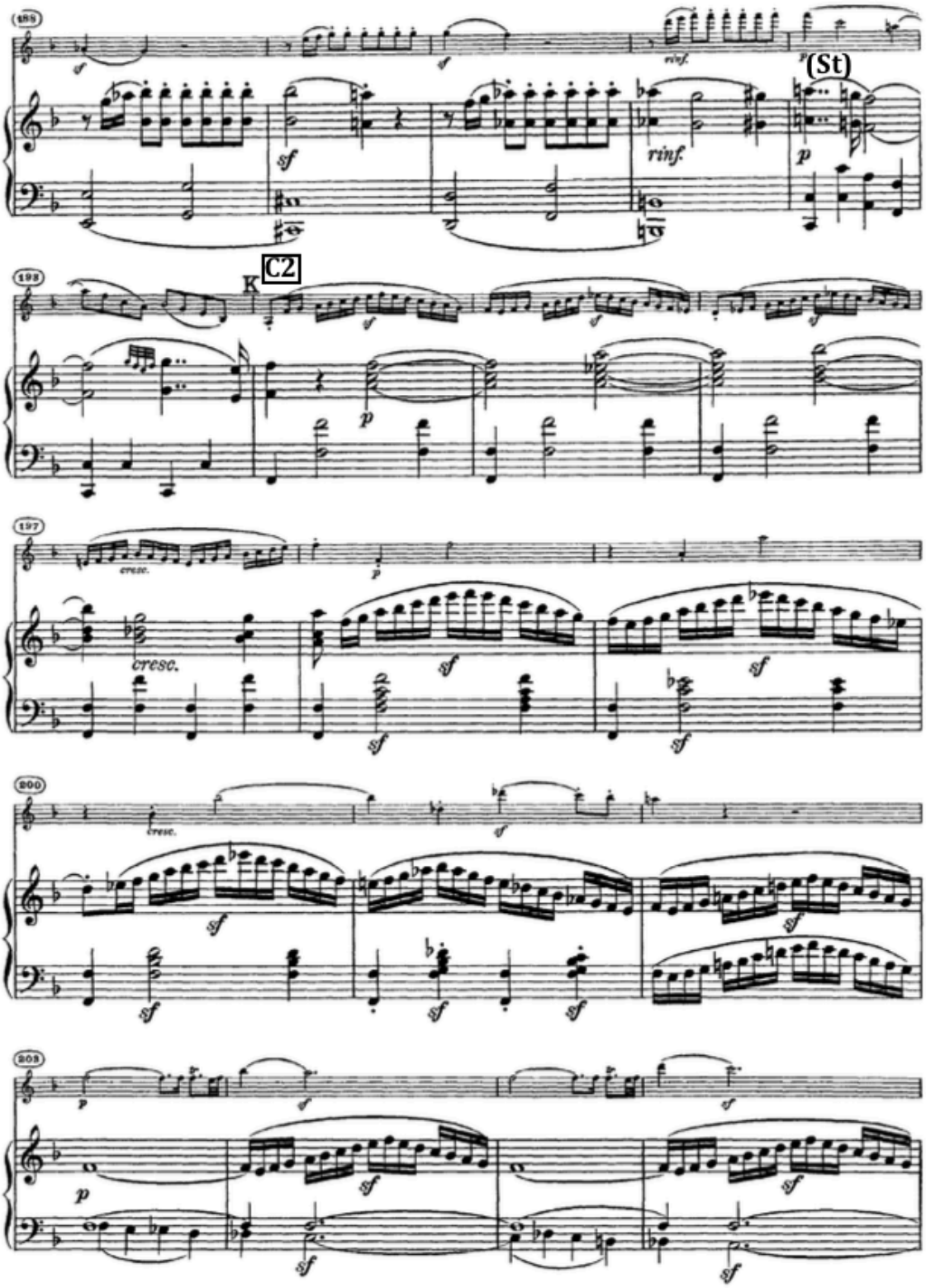

(T)
D
C2
(St)
cresc.
{Development}
(T)

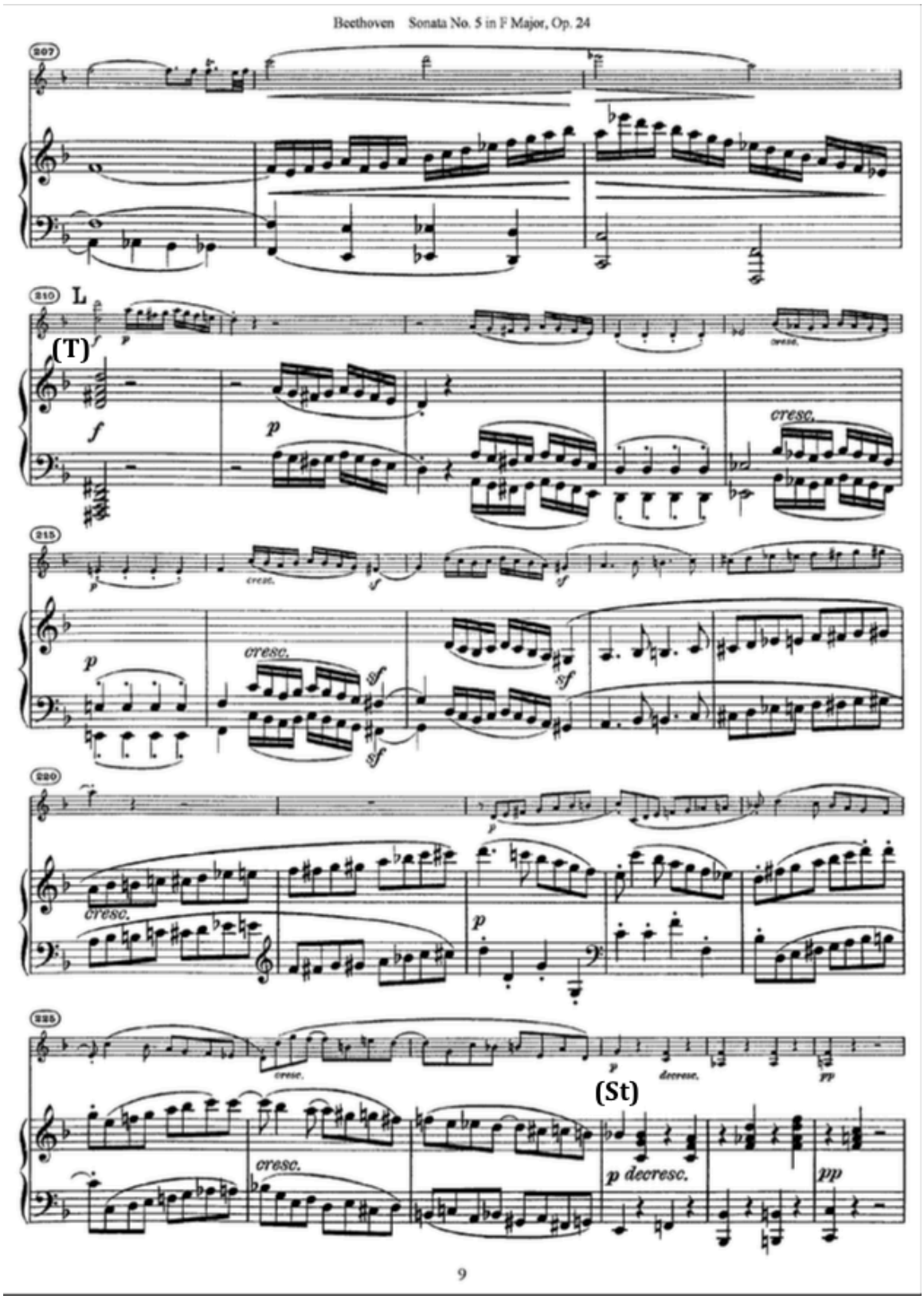

87
cresc.
fp
(St)
p
cresc.
fp
sf
sf
90
sf
cresc.
sf
sf
96
sf
(T)
f
sf
100
E
sf
105
sf

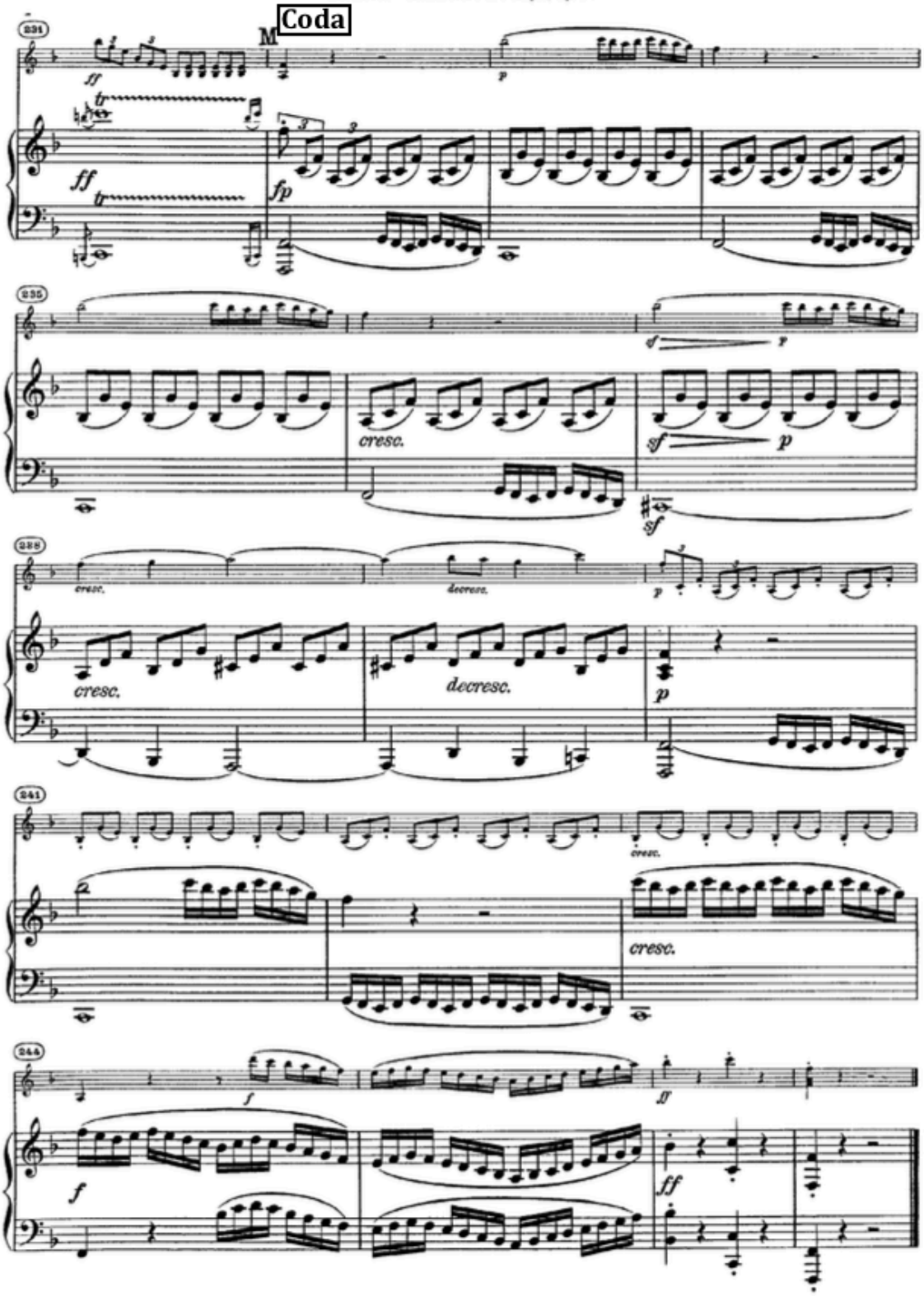

Retransition
{Recapitulation}
P
(St)
FM:


TR
G
(T)
cresc.
sf
H
ff
(St)
decresc.
p
(T)


Beethoven—Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24
S
(St)
FM:
(T)
ESC
C1
(St)
(T)
7


(St)
C2
K
cresc.


Beethoven Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24
207
210
L
(T)
215
220
225
(St)
9


Coda
231
235
238
241
244
cresc.
decresc.

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## EDUCATION

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**Music Theory**; minors in Music History and Literature, Cognitive Science
*Dissertation*: "Framing Listening Experiences in Selected Works of Corelli"
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**M.M. 2008** Michigan State University College of Music
**Music Theory**; specialization in pedagogy

**B.A. 2006** Indiana Wesleyan University (*summa cum laude*)
**Applied Music**; specialization in piano

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**2018-pres.:** Lecturer of Music Theory – University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (Edinburg, TX, and Brownsville, TX)

**2015-18:** Adjunct Instructor of Music Theory – Butler University (Indianapolis, IN)

**2014-18:** Adjunct Instructor of Music Theory and Music in General Studies – Indiana University (Bloomington, IN)

**2009-13:** Associate Instructor of Music Theory – Indiana University

**2010-12:** Aural Skills Coordinator – Indiana University

**2009:** Visiting Instructor of Music Theory – Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)

**2006-08:** Teaching Assistant in Music Theory – Michigan State University

## PRESENTATIONS

**2016: "Analysis of Subjective Listening Experiences: Attention and Affordances"**
-*Rocky Mountain Society of Music Theory* (Albuquerque, NM)

**2013: "Discontinuity as Structural Tool: Romantic Narrative Techniques in the Works of Robert Schumann"**
-*Indiana University Music Theory Colloquium* (Bloomington, IN)

**2011: "Strong Emotions, Agency, and the Role of 'Music Alone': Two Arias from Puccini's *Turandot*"**
-*European Music Analysis Conference* (Rome, Italy)
-*McGill Graduate Students' Symposium* (Montreal, Quebec)
-*University at Buffalo Graduate Music Symposium* (Buffalo, NY)
-*Indiana University Graduate Theory Association Annual Symposium* (Bloomington, IN)

**2010: "Galant Schemata and Classical Form: An Integrated Approach to Musical Structure"**
-*Turns of Phrase: A Mini-Conference on Schema Theory* (Bloomington, IN)